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Kols have neither mud walls nor wooden doors. When they leave the house, a bit of thorny brush is put in front of the doorway. This will keep out dogs and also any dangerous spirit which may be seeking admission. 342

When the building of a house is completed, there is usually a dedicatory ceremony consisting of installing and worshipping the household god or goddess or both, and a small niche in a corner or in the side wall is reserved for this purpose. The place is marked with *sendur* and the *hom* sacrifice is made. An offering of a chicken or young goat may also be made at the village shrine. A *tulasi* plant should also be planted somewhere in the courtyard. 342 776 778

DAILY LIFE. The daily life of the village and forest Kol centres mainly about the problem of daily bread. Before daybreak the women are up and are the first to be seen about the village. They sweep the house, the veranda and the courtyard; fetch water from a nearby stream, well or tank and grind the wheat for the morning meal. The sound of the grindstone is one of the earliest to be heard in a Kol village. The men are also up early, but do not have much to do in the way of household duties unless it is to chop a bit of wood. They wash their faces and rinse out their mouths with water which the women have brought, and, if they have bullocks, these are fed and got ready for the work in the fields; or if this is not to be done, they sit around in the sun in the courtyard and wait for some hot tea, or more probably for rice and *chapati* remaining from the meal of the night before. During the season when the work is heavy, they are in the field not long after the day has dawned, and the village is inhabited only by the women, children and older men. The bullocks for ploughing are driven before them; some of the older boys may assist in this, and the men carry the iron-pointed wooden plough. If some of the men-folk have no work in the fields, they may go into the forest for wood and grass; or, if there is plenty of food in the house and there is no pressing need for money, they sit around in groups and smoke cheap country cigarettes (*biris*) and gossip. 512 [252] [515] [264] [492] [407] [276 521]

In the meantime the women are preparing the morning meal. It is not usual for men and women to eat together. The women and children usually eat about the same time, though when the boys get in their teens, they like to eat with the men. During the middle of the morning, after the meal is nearly ready the women go for their daily bath to a nearby stream or tank. Women bathe every day throughout the year. The men bathe daily in the hot weather, but not so frequently in winter. The women do not remove their clothes when they bathe, though men usually remove all but a loincloth. The women [264] [515]

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sometimes silver, or again may be of cheaper metals. These are allowed to rub one against the other and make a tinkling sound as they move. There are ten toe-rings, one for each toe. It is not to be thought that these things are all worn continually. A few are always worn, and when some opportunity arises to wear the others, they are put on. 301

A lac *tika* is stuck on the forehead of young married women. This is put on by the husband in order that all may see that she is married and also to protect both of them. [585]

TATTOOING. Every woman should have tattoo marks (*godna*) upon her body. Men are not tattooed. The time for this varies. Among more Hinduized sections it is said that it should be done at puberty, that is, at the ages of ten to twelve. Again, and it seems to be the more common custom among the Kols, the *godna* is done shortly before the marriage. In certain cases which we came across, it was said to have been done after marriage. Kols do not do the tattooing themselves, but it is done by the regular tattooer called *bajigar* or *godnari*. 304 [184]

On the accompanying text figures tattoo designs copied from Kol women are shown. There is generally a purpose for each position. Design 1 is placed on various parts of the body. It is found over the right kidney region to take away pain. It is also put on the breasts to ensure a good supply of milk. On the palms of the hands it is believed to help in making *chapatis* light and palatable; on the arms it is supposed to benefit the husband, while on the face it is purely decorative. 304 789 [531]

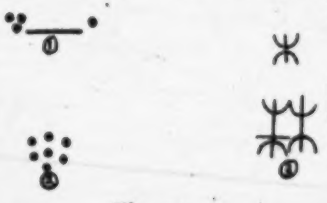

Fig. 12

Design 2 was found inside the left wrist.

Design 3 was on the right leg and takes away pain.

Design 4 was on the outside of the upper left arm. It was mainly decorative, but a protective significance was also suggested. It was said that in this case it took two hours to tattoo the design and that it was a very painful process. (See figure 13.)

Design 5 was found on the same woman on the outside of the left forearm. Another Kol woman had design 6 on the inside of the left forearm. This same woman had design 7 on the outside of the upper left arm. (See figures 14, 15, 16.)

There are certain traditions connected with tattooing. We were once told that when a Kolin is cremated Bhagawan catches the hand which has the *godna* and conducts her to *Baikuntha*. Therefore, it is 304 776 775 789

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304 775 776 789 exceedingly important that the hands and the arms should be tattooed. In case the body is buried, the tattoos, as another group told us, save the body; for when *Baimata*, a female demon, comes to devour it she cannot eat any of the tattooed portions, and thus much more is left to go to Bhagawan.[1]

304 531 789

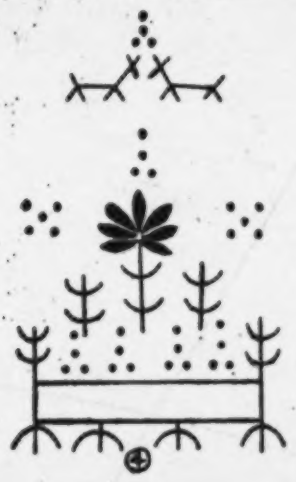

Fig. 13

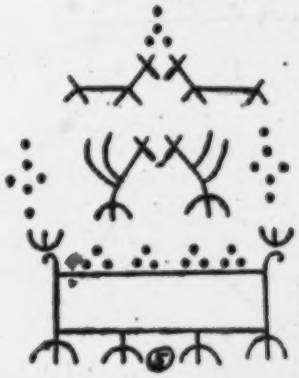

Fig. 14

304 789 Tattooing also wards off the evil eye, to which women, especially when with child, are very susceptible. As stated above, it has also a medical significance, in that it keeps the organs healthy and functioning properly. The tattooings about the ankle are a protection against snake bite.

ooo The art of tattooing is probably of Polynesian origin and its widespread practice among Munda tribes may be due to their common racial affinities.

304 It was noted above that Kols say that *Bajigars* do their tattooing. *Bajigar* literally means a 'juggler', 'actor'. Russell and Hiralal know nothing of this group unless it be the same as *Bajgari*, a subcaste of *Gandas*. The latter are wandering musicians and are considered unclean. It is not unlikely that Kols make use of other groups for tattooing but the available information is not conclusive on this point. The [386] term *godnari* means simply "one who tattoos." The colours usually used are blue and black, and the operation is often a painful one. The

[1] See Briggs, G. W., *The Chamars*, p. 148.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

[P.55]

CHAPTER IV

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, PUBERTY

For the Kols there are certain very obvious turning points of life, 771
and at such times Kols believe that evil is present, ready to render the 777
outcome of events unfavourable. To Kols the anxiety is not merely 782
one born of a physical crisis but goes deeper into their consciousness, for at such times favourable supernatural aid must be secured or the evil spirits will triumph over them. Hence at these turning points there are certain rites and ceremonies which must be observed and recourse should not be had to some newer unknown and untried method. Kols are unable to give a rational account of why they perform these rites; as far as they are concerned it is just the custom. Though in [177]
many cases the customs may have been adopted from Hinduism, it was so long ago that Kols are now altogether unconscious of it. It should be remembered, therefore, that many of the things described in this connection will also be found true of the village folk all over this part of Central India. An attempt has been made by long and patient enquiry to find out what the Kols themselves do on these important occasions, but we have not sought to compare them with other groups in this regard.

BIRTH CUSTOMS. *Pregnancy.* The pregnant mother is not con- 843
sidered unclean and there are no particular taboos placed upon her. [783]
She is allowed to go about her regular work and do all cooking and household duties without restriction. She may eat what she likes [862]
and there are no foods which she must avoid other than those a Kol never uses. She should be careful, however, not to go near places where *bhuts* and other evil spirits are known to lurk, they might attack her and as a result cause a miscarriage. When the woman comes to know that she is pregnant the matter is taken to the family goddess— 843
devi—who is usually resident in one corner of the house and she is promised that she will receive an offering if she protects the mother and 782
the unborn babe for the full time of pregnancy. After delivery, or [776]
often shortly before if all has gone well, the family will present to the *devi* the particular things that they had promised her. This may be an animal such as a goat, pig or chicken, or just a cocoanut. Again, the simple *hom* offering or fire sacrifice is common. This consists of an oblation of clarified butter (*ghi*) placed in the fire burning before the *devi*, the anointing of the wall with vermilion (*sendur*) and the

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Kols generally believe that the soul of the child enters and possesses its new body before the child is born. The more general opinion is that the movements of the child in the womb, which first occur about the sixth month, are the signs that the body has received its soul and is already a person. The soul is a gift to the child by Paramatma, and it enters the child's body through the mouth, nose or ears. The Kols' idea of the state and nature of the soul before entering the child's body is very vague and it is unusual to find any clear idea of transmigration and previous existence in another body.

Delivery. There is no uncleanness attached to the woman up to the time of the birth of her baby, but for six days thereafter she is considered unclean. The actual delivery of the child always occurs at home for no use is made of hospitals or the like.

When the time of birth is near the female relatives who have come for the occasion take charge of her. No male members of the family are allowed in the delivery room and men are kept out for the six days following. In a few places however we learned that they might enter after three days. Her mother-in-law and her sister are the ones to make the arrangements and do the actual work, although other female members of the two families may stand ready to assist. The woman awaits her time in a darkened room protected as far as possible from the entry of evil spirits. A few hours before (and sometimes just at the time) birth is expected a mid-wife—*dai*—is summoned. The Kols usually summon a Chamarin, or if she is not available, a Basorin. Sometimes, particularly around Jubbulpore, the Basorin seems to be preferred. If the birth should occur before the *dai* arrives the women in the house can do everything except the cutting of the umbilical cord. In one place we asked what would happen if the *dai* did not arrive and they replied that before a Kolin would cut the cord they would have to let the mother and baby die! Some Kols are said to do it themselves, but we did not find any who admitted that they do so. If the child should be born in a field the mother gathers up the child and the after-birth in her *sari* and carries it home and then the *dai* is called to cut the cord and care for the infant.

The birth usually occurs with the mother squatted on the floor, seated on her heels and bending over a large basket placed upside down on the floor, her head meanwhile resting on her hands. The female relatives support her and give encouragement. The *dai* is the one to receive the child. No one in the family should touch the child until it has first been purified by the *dai*. This applies to the mother as well. The *dai* cuts the umbilical cord with an iron instrument which

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poured over the mother who is now considered as perfectly clean—able to take her full place in society again. That night there is a feast for the women folk only, called *bilui*. Special foods prepared with *haldi* and *ghi* are partaken of, there is singing and dancing following the feast, and the whole ceremony usually lasts all night. If a feast is impossible raw sugar (*gur*) is distributed among the singers. The whole procedure

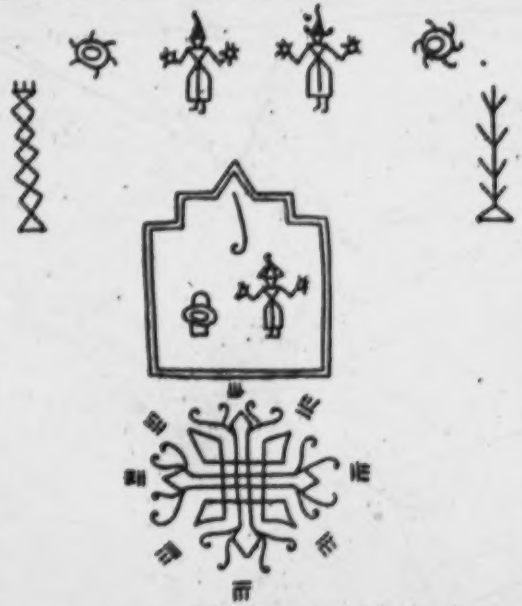

Fig. 18

is usually called *chhatthi*, or sixth day ceremony and signifies the removal of uncleanness. In Rewa we were told that at this time Dulha Babe, who is often regarded as a household god, should be worshipped. Certain drawings are put upon the walls of the houses at this time. They

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852 853 862 574 the child is fed and the money is used to buy an ornament. When groups using the finger were asked about using the coin, they said that it should not be done as the coin was not clean. Another group used a mango leaf instead of the finger. In Rewa State one group stated that just before the feeding of the child the mother should take it before the household deity, naming Bhanmati in this case, and bowing down before her ask the *devi* to protect the child, the household, and the children yet to come.

304 [326] NOSE AND EAR PIERCING. The piercing of the nose and ears is usually done by a *sonar* (goldsmith), although Kols may do it themselves. The hole is generally made by simply forcing the ends of the ring through the lobe in the ear, but for the nose a bronze instrument is used. As far as could be ascertained no ceremony is performed at the time nor does the *sonar* repeat any *mantras*. The best time to have piercing done is at the time of some large *mela* (religious gathering) in the vicinity, for then there are plenty of *sonars* on hand awaiting work. [757] When the nose is pierced a small plug of wood is first inserted, but the earrings are allowed from the beginning. The wound has onion and [465] turmeric rubbed into it, which help it to heal. The *sonar* is given a seer of rice, some chillis and a little salt, or may be paid four pice for the piercing and paid extra for the rings according to their value. It has already been noted that the Kathautiyas use woodpith to enlarge the holes in their ears and as a result their lobes have larger holes. [301] Kols about Jubbulpore claimed that in Rewa every Kol woman should have a ring of gold and silver on her ears or nose. Our observations however did not confirm this claim.

789 [30] 824 Earrings help to protect the child from evil. Other things as well ward off evil influences and we found that the *retha* nut (*Sapindus mukorossi*) and half a *ghata* nut (*Ziziphyus xylopyrus* (?)) are put into a strip of cloth, tied in a knot and worn round the neck. This is considered a good protection from *nazar*, the evil eye, but it does not help in the case of *bhuts*. Black bangles on the wrists and a white *pot* (dab) just in front of the ears also protect from the evil eye. A copper ring [776] may be put on one of the ankles for any evil spirit attacking the child will become imprisoned in this. Good spirits live in amulets about the neck and drive off *bhuts*. At other times a piece of a broken or [826] discarded human tooth, tied on a string about the wrist, is considered an effective protection. A strip of coloured cloth, red and yellow being preferred, may also be tied somewhere about the child's person. These are some of the measures which may be taken to protect the young child during the early months and years of life. Other instances

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for this village exogamy is that originally members of one and the same clan (*gotra* or *gotar*) lived together, as the traditions of the Dudh and Dhelki sections definitely testify, and as is still the case in many Hill Kharia settlements."[1] The Kols themselves offer other explanations for this type of exogamy, but the idea of the oneness of the village lies at the back of certain of their reasons. Some said that the children of a village living, as they do, like brothers and sisters makes any thought of such unions repugnant. A similar reason was implied in the response that the boys and girls know each other too well and such a condition would not be conducive to the future marriage relationships. It was also asserted that the presence of parents-in-law was not desirable in the same village, for if the bride was ever beaten by her husband (and it was thought that this was inevitable) her parents might be very angry and a serious quarrel with much trouble between the families was sure to result. Therefore it was considered best to get a girl from another village, and the further the village, the better the chances of avoiding such parent-in-law conflicts. Near Katni they claimed that they often got their girls from the Jubbulpore section, and that they sometimes had gone as far as Assam, where Kols have gone to work in the tea gardens.

As remarked earlier, no trace of a clan exogamy could be found among the Kols of to-day, nor an exogamy based on god-septs as among the Gonds,[2] where marriage is not possible between clans with the same number of gods. A family having three gods may marry into another with the same gods or into another with other and a different number of gods.

MARRIAGE LIMITATIONS. There is, however, a clear line limiting the choice of either the bride or the bridegroom. It is based on kinship, for as long as relationship is remembered no marriage should take place. No trace was found of the cross-cousin marriage nor of the ancient Munda custom of marrying a grandfather to a granddaughter.[3] No distinctions are made between cousins. The Kols also possess that which Lowie calls the "incest horror."[4] Children of siblings are brothers and sisters and between them marriage is considered impossible. The levirate, in which the younger brother may be expected to take the wife of a deceased elder brother, is acknowledged. There is, however, no necessity for his doing this, and public opinion does not enforce it; yet in a real sense he is responsible for her welfare and

1 Roy, S. C., *The Kharias*, p. 224.
2 Grigson, W. V., *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, pp. 194, 195, 220.
3 Ghurye, G. S., *Caste and Race in India*, p. 117.
4 Lowie, R. H., *Primitive Society*, pp. 15, 18.

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on a bed, if he is on one, as on the ground, but it is mostly affirmed that the ground is the place for the dying person. The body should be put there only when it is certain that the person is about to expire. The place where the body is laid should be first plastered with cow dung if that is possible. The head should be toward the north, that is, pointing towards the sacred Ganges, and the feet to the south, for it is in that direction that the soul has to go to the land of death. Most of the graveyards are to the south of Kol villages.

As soon as it is ascertained that the person is dead the fact of death is publicly proclaimed by loud lamentations set up by members of the family. The lamentations do not seem to be linked up with the frightening away of evil spirits but are essentially a natural expression of grief; although to an outsider they may seem to be overdone. The body should not remain within the house, but should be immediately removed to a place made ready for it on the veranda or the small courtyard in front of the house. There the body is laid upon the ground and is covered with a new white cloth. Nothing is done to the body in the way of measuring its length or the tying of its toes.[1]

PREPARATIONS FOR THE FUNERAL. Immediate preparations are now begun for the funeral, which, under favourable circumstances should be underway within an hour or two. Friends prepare a bamboo sling (*tatari*), made of two long bamboo poles with a few crossbars. On this the body is placed and fastened. A wooden *charpai* (rope cot) may serve just as well, and if the death occurred on the one, this is used. Such a *charpai* has to be discarded anyhow, and in this case it is abandoned at the place of disposal. It is, however, immediately taken possession of by a low caste Hindu—a Basor or a Domar.

Occasionally the body is washed with a bit of cold water at the house before being transported to the place of burial or cremation. The most common procedure, though, is that the body is not washed till the funeral grounds are reached.

If the person has died in the evening, too late for immediate disposal, the body may be kept upon the earth outside the house during the whole of the night. Friends and relatives sit round the body which is regarded with awe and sometimes fear. A lamp is kept burning so that no evil spirit may get possession of the corpse and enter it in the darkness. Nevertheless no efforts are made to tie the corpse

[1] As soon as the body is laid out, some non-Kol groups measure its length and tie its big toes together in order to determine whether or not a live spirit has gained entrance to the body during the period between death and its removal to the cemetery. If a spirit has entered, the body will elongate and the thread about the toes will be broken.

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764 nor measure it to see whether a spirit has gotten within and caused the body to swell. Other groups, such as the Chamars,[1] are said to do this. In Rewa it was reported that they should not wait till daylight, but should make immediate arrangements even though the work has [184] to be done at night. They said that if a man died about 9 p.m., they would have the corpse buried by 3 a.m. This, though, seems to be the exception and not the rule; other groups have denied this, saying that no burial ever occurs at night.

[443] TRANSPORTATION OF THE CORPSE. The body is transported to the burial or cremation grounds on the *tatari* as noted above. The corpse is always carried by men. Among the Oraons it is said that the custom once was that the women always carried the corpse.[2] Four men at a time act as pall bearers. The men are frequently changed so that as many as possible may assist. Even a man's [578] "enemies" should come and help and if such a person does there will be no further enmity between him and the rest of the family. This will also appease the spirit of the deceased. The body is usually carried so that the feet go first. There is a division of opinion on this matter though, as some Kols claim that the head should always be kept in the [823] direction of the Ganges; hence in cases where the graveyard happens to be in the north of the village the head is carried forward. That the feet go first is generally true in other groups, in order, it is said, that the spirit of the deceased may not find its way back. But the [775] Kol has no objection to the spirit's return, and in fact expects it back; actually food is put out near the house for it. If the body is set down for a time the head should point north and the feet south.

On the way to the *masan* or *marghat* (burial place) or the *ghat* or *chita* (burning place) there should be no chanting nor singing nor music of any kind. Lamentation and weeping is all that is in order. The party goes in two groups, first the men with the bier, and, following a short distance behind, the women and the children. The women bring the water for washing the body as well as the oil and turmeric for anointing. As the party proceeds it is customary to drop some mustard seeds along the way, and *laddu* balls made with sweetened *lai* (puffed rice) are also dropped at intervals. On the way back they try to see [787] [775] [776] if these have been picked up, and form an opinion as to whether the omens are good or bad. Some say that if the spirit of the deceased returns he will pick them up. The *rai* seeds will keep the evil spirits

1 Briggs, G. W., *The Chamars*, pp. 100—101.
2 Roy, S. C., *Oraon Religion and Customs*, p. 173.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

busy and they will not bother the sweets. Often it is said that no particular ceremonies are observed as the body is being carried toward the burial place. Nothing is done at the time of the crossing of small streams.

Up to this time no work has been done at the funeral ground, and no one has gone ahead to prepare the grave, or pyre; all is done after the arrival with the body. The funeral ground is always near some stream or *nala* (dried up water-course). Kols practice both cremation and burial and it is usual that the dead are cremated only a few feet away from the place where the burials take place. The introduction of cremation may be due to Hindu influences. On the whole burials are far more common than cremations because, Kols suggest, they are much cheaper, and the subsequent formalities of gathering the ashes and taking them to a river are not necessary. Burial is much the simpler process, and is first described.

BURIAL (*Garna.*) The funeral party arrives at the *masan* where the body is put down, head north and feet south. Some of the men in the party have brought implements for digging and go to seek a suitable place to dig the grave. Others remain with the body and prepare it for burial.

Preparation of the Body. Up till this time it is usual to find that the person has on the clothes in which he died. As he was transported to the burial place a white cloth was thrown over him. Now this and the clothes are removed. In the case of a male corpse the men attend to the changing of the garments, the washing and anointing. If the corpse be of the opposite sex the women attend to everything connected with its preparation. The body is first washed with water brought by the women from the village tank or well in new *gharas*. No pregnant woman should carry water, nor should she accompany the procession to the funeral place. Some of the water may be retained for a ceremonial sprinkling when the people get back to the village. After the body has been washed and dried it is anointed with a mixture of *til* or *karwa* oil and *haldi*. Sometimes *ghi* is also rubbed on. The corpse is now ready to wrap in new clothes which have just been purchased. If the family is not able to afford new clothes old ones which have been carefully washed will do. The grave clothes must always be white no matter the sex or the age. No coloured cloth should be used. The old clothes are taken away by the Basor. The hair is oiled and combed and the body is made as attractive as possible. Sometimes, in more Hinduised situations, the *nai* is called to shave the body and to prepare the hair, but he is not usually called for a woman. If the body is

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764 that of a woman her glass bangles are broken and her metallic jewellery removed. The breaking of the glass bangles is a symbol of the dissolution of her marriage. From many enquiries it appears that neither food, coins or iron is put into the mouth of the deceased.

766 Up to this point it seems that the bodies of men and women are treated alike, except that persons of corresponding sex make them
843 ready. Only in rare cases a trace was found which indicated that there is the belief that the soul of the pregnant woman might become
[776] an evil spirit called a *churel*; preparations for burial of such women seemed to be uniformly the same as when the woman is not with child. Only once in scores of burials was there any indication that the pregnant woman was cut open after her death and the fœtus removed and buried with her. This, if ever done among the Kols, is now a rare thing with them.

764 *Digging the Grave.* In the meantime the grave is being made ready. The spot where it is to be dug must first be "purchased." This is done by one of the relatives who, when the place has been decided on, strikes the ground five times with his *phaora* or mattock. Two pice are then laid down on the ground and the digging proceeds. It is proper for the chief male mourner to break the first earth at the spot agreed upon. He may take out five or seven clods and thereafter relatives or friends lend a hand and complete the task. The grave is dug in a north-south line, and is about six feet long, three feet wide and four feet deep. "Chest deep" is the rule. No special implements are used in digging nor are the ones used considered unclean afterwards. When the grave has been dug there are still things which must be done before the body can be laid in it. One of the relatives sprinkles a little salt on the bottom of the grave. Usually, though, a cloth is
[263] laid in first, using the one which was thrown over the body after death, or the blanket on which he died, and the salt is sprinkled over this. The body is now lowered into the grave. One or two men enter the grave, the body is passed down to them and they place it in its proper position.

In the case of a woman she is buried flat on her back, face upwards, having her arms stretched by her side with the palms up. Male corpses are laid face downwards with the hands folded behind
[823] over the buttocks, palms upwards. In both cases the head is to the north.[1] After the body is properly placed it is covered with another

[1] The direction in which the body is placed in the grave varies considerably among primitive tribes. The Murhas have the head to the south; the Birhors likewise. The Hill Bhuiyas are laid on the left side with the head to the south and face to the west. The Munda tribes, Kharias, Hos and Santals bury their dead with the head north. Bodding states that the Santals burn with the head south. (*Census of India*, 1931; I: 3, p. 102). Elwin finds that the Baigas bury with the head south. (*The Baigas*, p. 206).

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departed liked best in life : sweets, tobacco, and the like. A little water is generally left too. They assert that liquor is never put out. As soon as the food is set out they quickly turn and do not look back lest they should disturb the eater. If the *masan* is not too far away the food may

DONA - LEAF PLATE ON WHICH THE DEAD ARE FED

Fig. 24

be placed on the grave. The usual procedure, though, is to place it near the old home. The belief is that the spirit of the deceased wanders about for ten days and frequents his old haunts. After ten days *dutas*, corresponding to angels, come for the soul and conduct it to another realm. The Kols seem to have no great fear of the spirits of their departed. Nothing is done to appease their anger, and they are thought to be in general kindly disposed toward their loved ones. There was some evidence of fear in a few cases where, they said, if the ashes are not deposited in the river the spirits might come and trouble them ; but this may be a part of another outlook. On the whole Kols regard their dead as kindly. The food, which they set out day by day, is consumed by birds or other animals. There is no special kind of food placed out, merely that used by them in the house during the time of mourning.

FUNERAL FEAST (*Din Pani*). If the deceased was a male the funeral feast occurs on the tenth day after the death, and if a female on the ninth day. The time of the feast after a child's death is not so uniform. Unless the child is grown up and rather important, it is not usual to have a feast ; or if there is one it is a private one within the home. But in the case of adults such a feast must always be given, otherwise the honour of the tribe would be tainted, and the family rebuked by the *panch*. On the morning of the feast preparations for it are made in the house.

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brow of the deceased seven times as the mourner encircles the body. It is then put into the clothes and carried about.

If a woman is carrying a *ghara* of water and sees a dead body she should at once throw out the water and return to get a fresh supply.

KOL CONCEPTION OF THE SOUL AFTER DEATH. It was noted that it is not a general belief among the Kols that the spirits of the dead return to trouble the family. The belief that the spirit of a pregnant woman becomes a *churel* is well known but even this is not consistently held. Further comments on this aspect will be found in a later section.[1]

Generally speaking, the Kols believe that the spirits of the good dead go to a place called *baikuntha* which in a general sense corresponds to a place of happiness, or paradise. The wicked may sometimes return as evil spirits—a male as a *bhut* and a female as a *churel*; but one must be rather wicked to be so severely punished. Others say that the spirits of the bad go to *narkunda*, the Hindu hell, a sort of well or pit in the lower regions.

The Kols know the doctrine of *samsara* or transmigration of souls, but they seem to have neither a clear idea of its details nor of its implications. While this belief is usually admitted when they are questioned and reflected in some of their practices, nevertheless the general conception seems to play but a minor part in their thinking of the present and the future. "From now on we have nothing to do with one another."

1 See Chapter IX: Churel.

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Chapter VIII

RELIGION AND ATTENDANT FESTIVALS

771 Life apart from religion is unthinkable to the Kols. It has already been seen that their social activities are permeated with religion and magic. Nothing is done without reference to the all-pervading mysterious powers, for all of life's events may be traced to their activities, and it is fatal to be out of harmony with them. It is the duty of each individual as well as the whole community to keep the spirits contented and propitious so that they will aid them against the evils of life brought on by demons such as *bhuts*, *churels*, and the [776] like. The Kols endow these spiritual beings with a form of personality; they have an objective existence, and are able to make or mar the future. Consequently, they cannot be ignored, and must be propitiated in divers ways.

The religious rites and tribal regulations of the Kols are all intended to strengthen a totalitarian conception of life. To their type of mind life cannot be broken up into compartments and there is thus no clear line of demarcation between economic, social and religious spheres. These three are really one, and their harmony and stability must be maintained, and to break it at one point is to break it as a whole. Anything which may seem to change the existing order of things is dreaded by people such as we are studying.

776 Divine Orders. The Kols of Central India hold that there are certain Divine Orders which ought to be respected and acknowledged, even though all are not implored. Here are some typical examples:

(1) Bhagawan—the Supreme One.
(2) Bhagavati—a mediator as Khermai and others.
(3) Shardamai of the "Seven Sisters."
(4) Kalimai—really one of the "Seven Sisters."

Another group:

(1) Bhagawan.
(2) Shivari—the Mother of all Kols.
(3) Shardamai of the "Seven Sisters."
(4) Khermai—a mediator.

Again:

(1) Bhagawan.
(2) Bhagavati—a mediator.

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(3) Earthly King—"whoever he may be."

And a fourth:

(1) Bhagawan.
(2) Bhanmati—(meaning Bhagavati).
(3) Kalka of the "Seven Sisters."
(4) All others who are personally worshipped.

It has been noted that almost without exception the Kols speak of Bhagawan as the highest of all deities. The Supreme Deity of the Munda Tribes of Chota Nagpur is quite uniformly said to be Sing Bonga.[1] Crooke, in his *Tribes and Castes of the North West Provinces and Oudh* noted almost fifty years ago that the Kols knew nothing of Sing Bonga.

This is true of Central India to-day, for Kols have lost any recollection of this name as representing the Supreme Deity. Although Bhagawan is fairly consistently spoken of as the Supreme Being, nevertheless in the life of the Kols he is of small efficacy. He is not likely to pay much attention to Kols and no Kol priest knows how to approach him; only the Brahmins are said to have that ability. Kols have thus no exalted conception of Bhagawan. He is a passive distant Being influenced only by such mediators as Khermai and the like, and even then his actions are thought to be rather unstable and unpredictable. While Kols must without fail make offerings to *devatas* and *devis* yet they never make an offering directly to Bhagawan. If as a last resort an offering should be deemed advisable, a Kol may give a Brahmin a little money and ask him to make an offering and try to influence Bhagawan in his behalf. The very best Kols can do is to sing to Bhagawan. At such a time *bhagat* songs—songs of devotion—are used. Occasionally a *katha* is employed to invoke and praise Bhagawan: a Brahmin is called in and recites sacred stories (*kathas*). This, however, is infrequent among Kols and is practised mostly by higher castes. Again, the *hom* or fire offering, useful on all occasions, may be utilized, and at that time Bhagawan is invoked along with lesser deities. It is the *ever-present devis* who should be taken into account. The first step, according to Kols, is to please them. For example, Khermai, being a mediator between men and the great gods, can influence Bhagawan, but while the latter is more powerful than the *devis* and can overrule them, it is not often that he takes the trouble to do so.

Bhagawan is sometimes given the attributes of the lesser *devatas*

[1] Dalton, E. T., *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*, pp. 130, 132, 133, 141, etc.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

and *devis*. For example, it is stated that he is able to send certain diseases such as smallpox and cholera. But while he may send them, it is of no use to ask him to banish them; for this a lesser deity like Khermai should be invoked. It is only if she fails, and if it seems necessary to avert further distress, that they will call to him and promise him that if he will save them they will send for a *pandit* and have a *katha* in the name of Bhagawan. It is our opinion that there is little trace, if any, of a higher conception of Bhagawan among the Kols of this area.

The contacts of the Kols with higher Hinduism is feeble and markedly inconsistent. Both Vishnuite and Sivaite elements are inextricably mixed, and while Rama, Krishna and other *avataras* of Vishnu are known and stories about them are related, they have nevertheless almost no significance in actual religious ceremonies. Again, while the phallic symbols characteristic of Sivaites are not often used by Kols, nor Sivaite temples frequented, nevertheless Kali, the wife of Siva, is propitiated. Taken as a whole, the Kol worship has in it but little of adoration. It is mostly a matter of propitiation. When asked why they do not worship in certain near-by Hindu temples, the answer has been that their fathers never worshipped there and why should they.

NATURE WORSHIP. In connection with the worship of the Supreme One, mention should be made of the relation of the Kols to the forces of nature, so often deified in Hindu thought. Primitive peoples all seem to have respect for the powers of the sky, air and earth; and while in the case of the Kols it appears to have lost its primitive expression, and become Hindu in ideology, it is nevertheless apparent in their thought.

The Sun. The Sun is usually thought of as a great God, a beneficent deity who is the source of all heat and light. It is stated that their forefathers worshipped the sun, and that they do also, but on examination this worship turns out to be very formal. The village shrine often faces the rising sun, but no image of the sun is ever made. He is often called *Suryanarayana*, Sun-God.

No disrespect should be shown to the sun. When going to the fields for a call of nature, the Kol never squats without first ascertaining where the sun is, and as far as possible keeps it always to his right. The back, the front, and especially the left hand should never be toward it at such times.

The Moon. Some Kols consider the moon a goddess, while others do not seem to regard it in the category of deity at all. They

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say there is nothing one does in relation to it. The moon is thought of as feminine and the sun as masculine, for the moon is cold and the sun is hot. There are a number of beliefs and superstitions concerning the moon. It is good luck to see the new moon before any stars are out in the sky. On seeing the new moon for the first time a Kol may either tear a corner off one of his garments and cast it toward the moon, or may hold up the garment toward the moon, saying: "Take these old clothes and give me new ones." It is usual at the same time to take worn-out pieces of cloth or just rags, and hang them on the tree near the house. This attracts the goddess of torn clothes, Chithra *devi*, who will bring good luck and in the course of time new garments.

The moon is thought to have no evil influences upon men folk and therefore is not feared by them. Women, however, are likely to be affected by the moon and as far as possible should avoid it. Pregnant women especially should not expose themselves to the moon as it is liable to cause a miscarriage or a deformed infant.

The time of an eclipse of either the sun or the moon is a time of special precaution and worship. The Kols say that the sun is devoured by a giant whom they call Dhrubh. The concept that a demon devours the sun is common all over India, but the usual Hindu concept is that it is swallowed by one named Rahu, the "looser or seizer." The Kol story goes that both the sun and the moon at one time borrowed something from Dhrubh, whom Kols call the brother of Indra. This debt must be repaid, and if at any time the sun or the moon is not able to pay on the debt, it is attacked by Dhrubh who begins to devour it. He never quite does so, however and vomits it up, as there is still money owing and payments must go on. Others say that Dhrubh is merely jealous of the moon because she is worshipped and adored while he is not. Therefore he attacks either the sun or the moon. One should bathe at the time of an eclipse. During such a time women should remain inside for it is a very dangerous season especially if they are with child. The men may go out to bathe, sing and beat the drums. Wicked spirits are abroad, and unless the women are protected by charms, they are liable to be attacked. After the release of the sun or moon, the women go out to bathe. The Nerbudda is the best place in Central India, but any tank or river will do if one cannot go so far. After bathing they should give some alms to Basors who will be waiting near by. They give to no others.

At home no food is prepared or eaten during the eclipse. Nothing cooked is left in the house, and all uncooked food should be carefully protected so as not to become a prey to the evil spirits. All the earthen vessels used in connection with food and water should be thrown out

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and new ones brought in. Metal vessels are not affected. Hindu influences are apparent.

Rivers. The Kols say that there are but two rivers in India which are really sacred, the Ganges and the Nerbudda. They put the Ganges in the first place. Like most Hindus, Kols believe that it is good to bathe in these rivers and that to do so will help to wash away sin and give one merit. Kols in the vicinity of Jubbulpore frequently go to the Nerbudda, but seldom to the Ganges.

GODS AND GODDESSES WORSHIPPED BY KOLS. The worship to which the Kols really give themselves is not that of the gods of the Hindu pantheon, nor the forces or the powers of nature, but rather of the village deities—*deotas* and *devis*—who are intimately connected with their daily life and outlook. The majority of these deities are female, and it is such deities that really count. They are termed "mothers," and many have *mai* meaning "mother" attached to their name. The male deities are called *babas*, "fathers"; or *deos*, "godlings."

The Kol Pantheon. Among Hindus the Supreme Being is worshipped as Vishnu by the Vaishnavas and as Siva by the Saivas. Others who worship the Supreme deity exclusively as a female principle are called Saktas. The wives of Vishnu or Siva may be worshipped as Lakshmi and Parvati, thus introducing the female principle. Nevertheless the *devi* is secondary to the *deva*. In the case of Sakti worship, the Devi is made supreme and the absolute Brahma from whom Brahma, Vishnu and Siva proceed, can do nothing without her activity. This form of religion is seen particularly in Tantra and Sakta Hinduism.

The goddess of the Saktas may be called by the general term "Devi," but is worshipped in many forms. Various aspects of her life or achievements are remembered under different names, and she even may assume the form of a male. The worship of Devi is usually associated with Siva, rather than Vishnu, and many of the concomitants of Saivitism are associated with her worship.

From the evidence that follows, which is largely from the lips of Kols, it would appear that the Devi principle is the main factor at work in the Kols' idea of deity. Khermai is occasionally given an all-inclusive aspect. Bhagavati is essentially Devi. She has "six sisters" who are really forms of herself.[1] Kols have never been

[1] "In all parts of South India the seven sisters are the most prominent among Dravidian deities." —Elmore, W. T., *Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism*, p. 19. He names the following as examples, though he notes their names vary from place to place: Poleramma, Ankamma, Mythalamma, Dilli Polati, Bangaramma, Mathamma and Renuka.

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able to name for us just who the six are, but the following are among those included: Athabhuji, Bhanmati, Bindajali, Bindra Basni, Bindawasnimai, Chandni, Chandika, Kalimai, Kalka, Khermai, Maridevi, and Shardamai. It is not unlikely that others may be brought under the same principle, for Khermai acts as village watchman and protector, as well as guardian against spirits, disease, and death. In this latter aspect, she does the work of Bairam, Jognimai, Mahamai, Maridevi, Phulmatimai and Sitalamai.

The following list of Kol deities can hardly be arranged in the order of their importance to the Kol and therefore are listed alphabetically. Of course no one group has given all these names in any one list, and there is much overlapping. Lists made on the field have never agreed either as to the number or their order in importance. Sometimes we were assured that a certain deity was the foremost of all, yet a few miles away her name was not even mentioned. A few of the deities stand out in importance, and are discussed at greater length. No pretence is made of giving all the information available elsewhere about the gods and goddesses found in the Kol pantheon and no detailed comparative study has been attempted. What is related below is based upon what Kols have told us and presents their point of view:

Female Deities.	*Male Deities.*
Alop	Baghdeo.
Anjanidevi	Bahanar Singh Deo.
Asmanidevi (or mai)	Barandeo.
Athabhuji	Barum baba.
Bairam	Basdeo.
Barmati	Bhainsokhar.
Bhagavati	Bhaino.
Bhanmati	Bhainsasor.
Bindajali	Bhuiyan.
Bindra Basni	Burhadeo.
Bindawasnimai	Dulhadeo.
Burimai	Gurdayal.
Chandika	Gwalabansa baba.
Chandni	Hardaul.
Chithra devi	Khetrapal.
Desh hari	Mahabir.
Dhartimai	Mansa deo.
Hinglaj devi	Nanga baba.

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776 Jalni
Joginimai
Jogni
Kalimai.
Kalka.
Karmasin.
Khermai.
Lorhadhar.
Mahamai.
Marhai.
Marhimai.
Paramjiyoti.
Phonamukhi.
Phulmatimai.
Raktpiyasi.
Shardamai.
Shivari.
Sitalamai.

Phul.
Sannyasi deo.

FEMALE DEITIES WORSHIPPED BY KOLS

Alop. This deity is not widely worshipped. She is able to disappear very suddenly and reappear just as suddenly elsewhere.

[184] *Asmani devi.* "The heavenly one." This *devi* is the one who generally protects individual houses. She is particularly popular around Jubbulpore, but further north is not so often mentioned. [578 782] Her shrine is found in connection with the house, and a white flag, or a white segment on a red flag, usually indicates her presence. Her favourite offering is a young female pig. She is usually worshipped just outside the house, although she may also be found within. The accompanying diagram shows a typical shrine to Asmani devi. She is frequently called Asmanimai.

Athabhuji. This is the goddess of eight hands. Kols are not clear about her, but probably this is a term for the wife of Siva, called Uma, Parvati, Durga, Kali and Bhavani.

Bairam. This deity is generally female, but sometimes is considered a male deity. She is usually kept outside the house, and seldom, if ever, within it. The Kols say that her chief work is to frighten away evil spirits—*bhuts.* As long as she is near the doorway, such will not dare to enter. The name may be related to the hero Bhairon, or may be a confusion with Barambaba.

Bhagavati. Really means "one who is a devotee"—a *bhagat.*

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This is a very general term with Kols and usually refers to one of several. Khermai, Shardamai, and the like are frequently called Bhagavati.

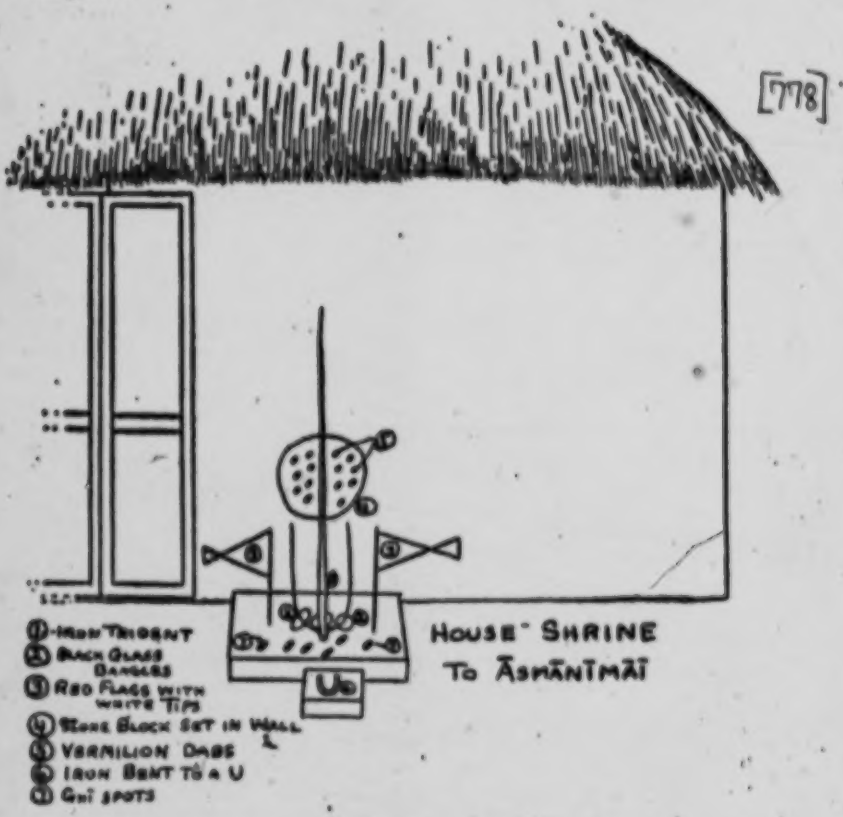

Fig. 25

Bindajali, Bindra Basni, Bindawasnimai are goddesses who had their origin in the Bind mountains, the modern Vindhyas. While not very important to the Kols of today, nevertheless they may represent the names of some of their deities in other days when they lived in the Vindhya mountains. It is not unlikely that they are forms of Kali.

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776 782 *Buri devi.* "Bad Goddess." Sometimes this is made a male and called Bura Deo. It is probable that this is connected with the chief Gond deity, Buradeo. This deity is not widely worshipped among the Kols, but should a sacrifice be necessary she prefers a female kid of reddish colour.

Chandika. This deity is said to have one body and two mouths, one in the front and the other in the back, and is a form of Kali.

Chithra devi. Goddess of torn clothes. This deity is worshipped in connection with the new moon, when a piece of torn cloth should be offered her, good clothes held up, or some cloth tied to a Tamarind tree. In this manner she helps one to get new clothes.[1]

[241 184] *Dhartimai.* The goddess of the earth. Worship and ceremonies in connection with this deity are observed at the time of ploughing and threshing, but only by the agricultural Kols. A *hom* offering is all that is usually given her. Probably she is related more closely to the Hindu pantheon than are those requiring a bloody offering.

[773] *Jalni.* Some Kols claim that Jalni is the Creator of the universe. This may refer to [illegible]pati, the Hindu deity presiding over water. The Kols have the legend that before there was an earth all was water. Jalni, however, is not much worshipped by Kols.

[778] *Jogni devi.* Frequently called Jognimai, is a goddess who particularly cares for children. The picture shows a shrine outside the home.[2] The pole above has black bangles and drops of *ghi* may be observed at the base. When children are ill, or in danger, or affected by the power of evil spirits, Jognimai should be propitiated.

[751] At the time of a smallpox epidemic, one of the parents offers her a cocoanut and pours water over her shrine, in order that she may not allow the smallpox to attack the children.

[496] A Kol who worked on the railway claimed that it was Jognimai that caused the locomotives to run. He would often make an offering to her just before the locomotive started.

Kalimai. Kalimai is very popular among all the lower classes, and the Kols have also accepted her. While they do not give her the chief place, which is usually given to Shardamai, yet she is said to be one of the six sisters of Shardamai. It is not customary for Kols to

[778] have a shrine to her alone. When she is worshipped, it is at the village shrine along with the other deities such as Khermai, more generally

[822] worshipped by Kols of the village. Her colour is black, and black in a flag over a shrine indicates that she may be worshipped there. She should be offered darkish-coloured cocoanuts, or if animal sacrifices

1 See page 131.
2 See plate XXI.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 782

are made, the animal should be of a black colour. Black glass bangles will also be attached to her part of the shrine or found where she is worshipped. She likes the Tulasi plant and sometimes lives in it. [822] [824]

Occasionally she is a household goddess and is worshipped along with other household deities.

When the spirit of Kali possesses a worshipper, he can walk without discomfort or injury on spiked sandals.[1] [792]

Kalka. Is one of Sharda's six sisters. She is seldom invoked, for according to Kols, when Shardamai or Kalimai are worshipped she is happy and pleased.

Khermai. This *devi* is probably the one most frequently worshipped by Kols. The Census Report classes her as the Earth Goddess[2] and Crooke[3] believes Khera to be the same as Khetrpal, the field guardian. Sometimes it would appear that the term included many kinds of deities such as Kali and Sitalamai. Her shrine is found in or near every Kol village, and she is always mentioned; it is also frequently claimed that she must be considered first, subsequently any others that one might choose. Sometimes she is called Bhagavati and is said to be the best mediator between men and Bhagawan, for if she is kept pleased and contented, one does not have to worry about Bhagawan.

Khermai's duties are manifold. She is the village watchman and protector. She wards off evil spirits and prevents their entry into the village. Sometimes her shrine is placed at the south of the village to ward off the evil spirits which so frequently come from that direction. In times of illness, she is invoked, and is thought to be intimately connected with disease; when one has smallpox she is worshipped in the person who is stricken. Cholera and smallpox are sometimes said to come directly from Bhagawan, and she is the best protector in case he sends them. On such occasions she should be given a libation of water and the village may be "tied" with her help.[4] [778] [753]

She is thought to help the Kols in all kinds of difficulties; she guards a man going on a journey; as he leaves, he may promise her an offering of a cocoanut which he will give if he returns safely. At set times she possesses her devotees, and through them reveals her will and answers their questions on problems confronting them. The sure test of her presence is the power to thrust an iron trident through the tongue or cheek. [484] [785]

1 See pp. 148, 180.
2 *Census of India*, 1911. X:1, p. 88.
3 Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, pp. 92, 93.
4 See Chapter IX, Tying the Village.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 1782 Khermai is offered many things: a few annas may be left at the shrine; cocoanuts are a favourite offering; *ghi*, *puris*, *balasa*, and *ganja* are forms of food and drugs which please her and are frequently placed before her shrine. She likes *sendur* marks here and there about the place where she is worshipped, and incense is welcomed. Lemons and limes are always acceptable and should be placed before her. They also prevent the evil spirits from molesting the place.

If the occasion is sufficiently serious, an animal sacrifice is made to Khermai. Apparently no particular colour is required, although [825] in one centre it was said that should a chicken be offered, it should be white. She likes young female animals: pig, kid or lamb. These are later eaten at a ceremonial meal in connection with the shrine.

[779] Khermai is best worshipped under a *nim* tree (*Melia azadirachta*), and her shrine is generally found there. If there is no *nim* tree [824] available, a *pipal* (*Ficus religiosa*) or a *bel* (*Aegle marmelos*) tree will do. She is generally worshipped after sunset, although this is not always the rule, especially if there is an emergency. In summer time when it is hot and dry, some *gharas* of water are kept at the shrine and people frequently pour water over the shrine to cool the *devi*.

If any danger threatens the village or an epidemic is near, some milk, liquor and powdered charcoal may be mixed and sprinkled about the village in her name. This is followed by an animal sacrifice and a ceremonial meal at the shrine. In case of smallpox, in addition to the regular offerings, she may be given a bath each day for ten days. Then a mixture of oil and turmeric powder is poured out before her.

Mahamai. "The Great Mother." This goddess is the same as [753] Sitalamai, the goddess of smallpox and the name is an euphemistic title. Kols are not always clear concerning the relationship of the two and sometimes they have been named together. A red flag indicates the presence of this deity.

[761] *Marhai*. Is said to be the goddess of death, but under this name at least, does not seem to be very important, and no satisfactory information can be given about her by the Kols. She is probably the same as Maridevi.

[753] *Maridevi*. The goddess of epidemics, particularly of cholera and plague. By some informants she is said to be Khermai's elder sister. She is very powerful, and there is no better protector from these diseases than this goddess. In the Kaimur hills one group claimed that she was the most powerful of all the *devis* which they worshipped.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

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They said that she spreads and controls not only cholera and small-pox, but all sorts of diseases.

She should never be offered a chicken, because it is not valuable enough to please her. She desires a young goat or pig. The *bow* sacrifice is also pleasing to her and a cocoanut always is acceptable. Pots were noticed hung in trees, and it has been ascertained that these are for her to refresh herself on a hot day. In this way they hope to win her favour.

Phulmatimai. Is a sister of Sitalamai, goddess of smallpox, but causes a milder type of eruptive disease. An offering to Sitalamai is pleasing to her, and no further sacrifice need be offered.

776 778 782

Shardamai. Shardamai is generally placed at the head of their pantheon by nearly all Kols. Her name may be traced to the Sanskrit word *sarada* meaning autumnal. Her temple is near Maihar about 100 miles north of Jubbulpore, near the borders of Rewa State. It is situated on a steep hill which rises about five hundred feet above the surrounding plain, and can easily be seen to the west of the railway line. The spot is a very popular place of pilgrimage, both for Kols and other tribes and castes. A visit to this spot elicited much information about her and her worship. She has six sisters, according to informants, among them being found Kali, Kalki and Kalchi. In olden days animal sacrifices were made and the place ran with blood, but such are now prohibited by order of the authorities of Maihar State. Cocoanuts now represent the chief offering, but along with them *ghi*, *loban* (incense), *puris*, flowers, and the like are put before her. The hillside is literally covered with the shells of the cocoanuts broken before Shardamai. There are also images of other gods and goddesses under the same temple roof. These include Kali, the black goddess, wife of Siva; Narsingha, an incarnation of Vishnu; Bhagawan, the adorable one; Hanuman, the monkey god; Annapurna devi, here worshipped by the women desiring children; Chhatthi devi, worshipped on the sixth day after the child's birth, (and here the hair of the child's head is first shaved before her); Chandi devi, said to be a sister of Kali; Kotwali devi, the protector of the temple and the worshippers who come; and finally Kal Bhairo, said to be the son of Kali. In this strange company Shardamai is central and is *the* goddess of the whole.

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While Shardamai dwells in Maihar and is localized as no other Kol deity, she is nevertheless also worshipped in the homes and at the village shrines. In some places a small earthen platform, about four feet square and raised some six inches above the ground, is sufficient. Upon this a trisul is stuck in the centre to represent the place of her

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 778 782 worship. No image is found, but there are exceptions. In Rewa State it was said that she should be worshipped at least twice a year: two days before the *Dasara* festival (September-October) and eight days after Chaita (March-April).

While animal sacrifices are forbidden at the Maihar temple, they may still be offered at the village shrine.[1] One group said that a black [184] kid was the only acceptable offering, while from others it was learned that chickens, lambs and suckling pigs may all be sacrificed. The usual [787] vegetable offerings are likewise acceptable. She frequently possesses people and speaks through them.

Childless women, especially, should worship her and make offerings [342] and sacrifices, so that she may speak to them through the *panda* and tell them what to do before they can expect children. Shardamai is therefore [755] reverenced at this place by childless women. It is also claimed that she can restore sight and cause the blind to walk and is a general miracle worker.

776 785 During *Chaita*, the Hindu month corresponding to parts of March and April of the Christian calendar, there should be an evening fast to Shardamai covering nine days. Regular food may be taken only in the [805] morning, and the evening meal should be limited to water, milk and water-nuts called *singhara* the Water-caltrop (*Trapa bispinosa* or *natans*). [262] On the ninth day the big offering to Shardamai must be made. Before anyone may partake of the meal on the ninth evening, a cocoanut[2] must [782] first be broken before the village shrine and offered to her, and then the edible part distributed to those present. Thereafter regular meals may be taken. If possible someone from the village, or better yet several from the chief families should go to Maihar to worship. Their worship at Shardamai's temple and the worship at home will reinforce the bond of friendship which they must maintain.

Shivari or Sheori. Shivari is called the mother of all Kols and served 776 Rama during his exile and search for Sita and has thus become deified. Shivari is nearly always listed by Kols, nevertheless actual worship [778] of her is rare; but Kols talk of her temple somewhere in Rewa and also at Sheori-Narayan near Raipur, eastern Central Provinces. Stories concerning her are found in connection with the study of the origin of the Kols and in the chapter on legends.[3] She probably represents a tribal goddess.

[753] 782 *Sitalamai*. This name is a euphemistic title meaning the cool,

1 Kali worship is associated with animal sacrifice and Shardamai is probably equivalent to Durga in Hinduism.
2 Probably a relic of human sacrifice.
3 See pp. 8-10; also Chapter X.

l:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

the peaceful one, for she is the goddess of smallpox. The burning fever and high mortality are a terror to the village people. Any kind of kid is said to be acceptable to her, and a red flag usually marks her presence. This *devi* is mostly worshipped by Kol females, although both boys and girls go before her with vegetable and food offerings for five successive days. If men should be required to make the offering, on account of some home condition which prevents the women from going to the shrine, they must not be accompanied by any female relative, but must go alone. During an attack of the disease, the Kols suppose that the *devi* is actually dwelling in the person ill, and great care must be taken to keep her in a good humour. On no account should a Kol who dies of smallpox be cremated, as it is likely that the *devi* is still residing in him, and to burn his corpse would antagonize her.

This concludes the catalogue of the chief female deities worshipped by the Kols. In the future more information may be made available about the others not yet discussed at any length.

MALE DEITIES WORSHIPPED BY KOLS

Baghdeo. Baghdeo is the tiger god and is generally revered all through the jungle country of Central India. Certain of the tribes of this area have septs named after the tiger and it may be that there is a definite totemistic relationship. Russell and Hiralal[1] note that some of these primitive tribes such as Bhatia, Binjhwar, Kawar, Kharia, Kol, Korkus, Mowar, Rautia and Savara have septs relating to the tiger which may have totemistic implications. The Rautias, for example, are said to throw away their earthen pots on hearing of the death of a tiger. Other groups abstain from killing the tiger. In some cases the connection between taboos and totemism is very slight as Grigson has noted among the Hill Marias.[2] He also records[3] that the tiger was supplanted by the buffalo as the totem of one group "since tigers so far forgot themselves as to kill and eat some men of the phratry." Now they retaliate by joining the tiger beats! Among Gonds in general it appears that Bagh worship has become all but universal, and that this worship persists irrespective of clan, phratry or tribe. Since it is apparent that the worship of the tiger is largely confined to jungle areas, much of the worship is probably protective rather than totemistic. If there ever was a totemistic stage it is now long past and all but forgotten.

1 *Op. Cit.*
2 *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, p. 239.
3 Page 241.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 825 773 According to Kol legends tigers and Kols have been closely associated. This may refer to the jungle habitation of early Kols or it may have a totemistic aspect. Descent from the totem may be implied in the legend recorded on pages 41-42. But now the tiger and the Kol have separated and gone their own ways, this being symbolic of changes in the Kol way of living. The tiger is reverenced because he is feared. While Kols claim that they should never hunt the tiger nor assist in a beat, nevertheless this principle is often broken due to the temptation of money. This attitude may have a totemistic origin, but it also may be due to the fear that he will return evil for evil.

776 782 825 The tiger should be propitiated along with the household gods, but as a rule he is not included in them by people who live in areas where tigers are not to be expected. It is the Kol that lives in or near the jungle who fears the tiger. Baghdeo is offered a cocoanut, *chapatis* and other food. At the *Holi* season he should be given a chicken. The opinion is advanced that if this is overlooked Baghdeo may attack, kill, and eat male members of the family not sacrificing to him. It is claimed by these folks that he will never attack a woman or a girl. If he is pleased they may go into the mountains and jungle in search of wood and grass without fear of him. If he is met, he will pass them by, and should be respectfully spoken to. A Kol need not fear a tiger unless he has neglected his offerings to Baghdeo.

776 842 782 *Bahanar Singh Deo* is another of the Kol household gods and has the power to close the womb of the women folk and cause barrenness. In one centre it was said that women who desired children should come before him and sacrifice to him in preference to Shardamai. If Bahanar Singh should fail, then Shardamai may be tried. This *deo* is particularly fond of white offerings, and a white kid or chicken is preferred. This should be offered at the village shrine. At the time of offering the woman desiring children comes before the shrine with a pot of oil and *haldi*, into which she dips her right hand and somewhere about the shrine makes an impression of the whole of her hand. This attracts Bahanar Singh and helps him to identify the woman. The *panda* is there and cuts the animal, sprinkles the blood, and tells her what to do in order that her prayer may be granted. He may advise certain other offerings, and perhaps command that she abstain from certain foods, particularly rich ones, for a season.

776 782 824 *Barum baba*. Barum *baba* is quite often thought of as an evil spirit. In the Kaimur hills it is said that he always lives in *pipal* trees. No image or sign of his presence is made. The offerings are simply placed at the foot of the tree which he inhabits, and cocoanuts and *khichri* were mentioned as offerings. It was also asserted that he likes to have the sacred

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

thread hung on the tree in which he is found. Animals are never sacrificed to him. One such tree, claimed to be the dwelling place of Barum *baba* was inspected, but there was no sign of offerings having been made there. As far as possible Kols avoid trees inhabited by him, particularly after dark.

In Rewa, Barum *baba* was said to be the spirit of a deceased Brahmin. Probably this is why the sacred thread is so acceptable to him as an offering and should be hung on the trees in which he resides.

Bas deo and Barum *deo* are probably the same in the thought of the Kol. These spirits prefer to live in the *bar* or Banyan tree, though they are reported as living in *pipal* trees as well. They are mostly thought of as vindictive and evil, but it is also said that they are somewhat afraid of people and that they try to please men if they can; it is good for man to get a vision of Bas *deo*.

Bhainsokhar, *Bhaino*, and *Bhainsasor* are all forms of the buffalo god or demon. Crooke has certain information in this connection.

> The Kols believe in Naga-ora who occupies wells, tanks, and stagnant waters, the embodiment of malaria, and Garha-ora, a water goddess, 'frequently and truly described as the cause of sickness, and propitiated with sacrifices to spare their victims' (from Dalton). Such spirits sometimes appear in the form of animals, like Bhainsasura, the buffalo demon akin to Mahishasura, with the same meaning, who gives its name to Mysore, the embodiment of death, like the black buffalo on which Yama, god of death, rides, which was slain by Durga, the life protecting goddess. They often show themselves in the shape of a turban which clings to the fisherman's hook and increases in size as he tries to drag it ashore or pulls him into the water—all impersonations of the vague awe and mystery of dark, still water pools. Hence they are special protectors of passengers at Ghats or fords.[1]

The Kols we interviewed are vague about this deity, but feel that the buffalo god is dangerous and ought to be propitiated. At Benda a shrine was found to him. A picture shows the white mound in the centre of a platform as his dwelling place.[2] The plants are *Tulasi*—the sacred basil.

Burha deo. This deity is probably the same as Bura *deo*, said to be the chief deity of the Gonds. While Kols know him, it appears that very little is actually done, other than that his name may be called at times of worship along with other lesser deities.

Dulha deo. The worship of Dulha *deo* or Dulha *baba* is widespread in Central India, and the Kols have much to do with him. He

1 Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 60.
2 See plate xxii.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

776 is the bridegroom deity. The general view is well summed up by Crooke:

> Strange, abnormal features of the scenery often become objects of veneration. In Mirzapur District there is a rock in the form of a hideous, grinning skull, with enormous teeth, known as Dantandeo, 'the demon with the teeth'. ....The same feeling is illustrated by the cult of Dulhadeo, 'the bridegroom deity', which is widely spread from the Central Provinces up to the hills which rise above the valley of the Ganges. He is one of the deified spirits of men suddenly slain before their desires were accomplished, and like others of his kind he should have become a Bhut or malignant spirit. But he is now generally regarded as a friendly household godling. Stone pillars and rocks are often associated with his tragic fate.....[1]

A Kol at Barela insisted that Dulha *deo* was the supreme deity, but generally speaking he is regarded by the Kols as a beneficent household god. [778] He usually dwells within the house and a piece of stone placed in a notch in the wall and daubed with *sendur* indicates his presence. He is offered sacrifices at set seasons, but before each meal a little food should be put aside for him. If he is neglected and gets angry he may cause harm to the family. If he is to be venerated outside the house, a little mound of earth about eight inches high may be raised close to the wall of the house not far from the doorway. This is simply whitewashed and called Dulha *deo*.

776 782 [805 787 Offerings made to him are much like those given to other deities. It is often said that he should never be offered a chicken. He prefers either a kid or suckling pig. His favourite time of worship is in the Hindu month of *Kunwar*, (September-October). This is the time his spirit possesses people and speaks through them.

[264 585] In Rewa, Kols say that after the marriage festivities the families concerned must not eat without first making an offering to Dulha *deo*. The main offering should be a male pig, which is offered to him, then cooked before the shrine and eaten sacramentally. The bones and pieces that are left are buried in a hole in the floor of the house, for if they should be thrown out or exposed trouble would result.

Gwalbansa baba. This deity is another household god of the same type as Dulha *deo*. He is said to be the master of the house and is always worshipped within the dwelling. He is particularly propitiated at *Jawara* time when an animal offering, preferably a goat or pig, is sacrificed inside the house. The blood is sprinkled about the [264] niche in the wall down near the floor which had been freshly plastered. Nothing whatsoever of the slain animal should be allowed to go out-

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 100, 101.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

side the house. The entrails and anything left over after the meal, such as bones, hair, skin and the like are thrown into a hole especially prepared for them. This hole is dug in the earthen floor not far from the place where Gwalbansa *baba* dwells. A bit of ashes may first be placed in the hole, then the leftovers, and on top a good layer of ashes; then the hole closed up again with earth and the spot plastered. Fevers and heart diseases are said to be the result if any part of the offering is carelesaly exposed.

Hardaul baba is commonly worshipped by the Kols in connection with cholera. He is then offered a red chicken and cocoanuts. Crooke has noted the origin of this deity who is really a modern one.

> In Upper India the chief cholera godling is Hardaul. Hardiya, or Hardiha Lala, the second son of Bir Singh, Raja of Orchha in Central India, who in 1602 at the instigation of Salim, afterwards the Emperor Jahangir, slew the accomplished Abu-l-fazl, the historiographer of the reign of Akbar. Jhajhar Singh, the elder brother of Hardaul, suspecting that he was engaged in an intrigue with his wife, compelled her to poison him at a feast. His horses and dogs died with him, and, like the hero, became dangerous ghosts. When his body was cremated, a pole was set up to mark the place, and when his sister came to mourn him and flung her arms about the post, it split in pieces as a proof that he recognized her. His ghost continued to wander until he was deified and worshipped.[1]

Khetrapal, "field guardian," called Bhumiya sometimes, is another agricultural deity. He guards the fields and, during the growing season, an earthen pot is whitewashed, some black daubs are put upon it and it is placed upside down on the top of a pole in the field.

Mahabir. "The Great Hero." This is the name by which the Kols speak of Hanuman, "he with the great jaws"—the monkey god. *Langur* apes (*Semnopithecus entellus*), are very common through many parts of the Central Provinces and are highly respected and protected.

One group of Kols asserted that Mahabir is the greatest of the deities and that the sun is his shelter. Mahabir's favourite colour is red, and it is not uncommon over village India to see the figure of the monkey god smeared with *sendur*. Kols say that he likes red and that it not only increases his beauty, but also his wrath against the evils affecting human kind. When his wrath is thus aroused, he seeks to remove all the troubles and miseries of human beings. The red causes him to hate these things, and he can effectively act only when his wrath has been aroused by its presence.

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 129.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

He is given offerings of foods and vegetables and the *hom* offering is always acceptable. Because he is in the form of an animal, he should never be given an animal sacrifice. Among Hindus, Hanuman is also worshipped by the Vaishnavite sect which does not offer animal sacrifices. According to some Kols, Tuesday is the best day to offer Mahabir his sacrifices and these are offered only by men. The cocoanuts and foods offered and placed before him are, after prayer, taken up and distributed among the worshippers present. Some said that Mahabir is displeased if anyone should be worshipped before him. He has supreme control over all *devis* and *deotas*, and they have no power over him nor can they touch him. Therefore they worship him first. It was only one group that made this surprising claim.

Mansa deo. Mansa *deo* is also a household god, but is usually worshipped outside the house. A small platform of mud is raised by the wall just in front of the house, and on the wall some daubs (usually four) of *sendur* are put, and two small red flags are set up. Some ashes will often be found there and bangles, beads, and the like. If Mansa *deo* is not kept contented by the usual offerings of food and cocoanuts, he may attack the family. When he is happy, he wards off evil spirits.

Nanga baba. This word means "Naked Father," and the Barela Kols believe that he lives in the hills just above that town. He is greatly respected for his purity and plainness of life. His main task is that of stone sculpturing. Many of the oddities of geology about Barela are ascribed to him and his work, and some of the stones which he is said to have cut up, smoothed and flattened are used today for the building of bridges. Nanga *baba* fashioned them, they believe.

Sannyasi deo. This god is usually found associated with the village shrine. Probably he is the spirit of an ascetic of some kind, now elevated to the place of a *deota*. He is offered cocoanuts and tobacco, and protects people. The offering of tobacco probably confirms the conjecture that he was once a wandering *sadhu*. At the time of the *bawa* if he should enter and possess a devotee, the person possessed will reveal the presence of Sannyasi by taking up the iron tongs kept at the shrine and beating and pinching himself with them. To do this is a sure sign that Sannyasi *deo* has come and is truly present.

All of these deities are known to the masses of the people in Central India, and are propitiated from two points of view. This has been aptly described as "spirit scaring" and "spirit squaring."[1] If

1 Enthoven, R. E., *Folklore of Bombay*, p. 14.

2. Lit., Mahabir or Hanuman.]

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

the presence of the spirit is considered injurious to the interests of what is in hand, it should be driven away so that it may not interfere. The "spirit squaring" aspect is perhaps the more common in the case of the deities. They are to be kept happy, propitiated, and given a place to rest. If neglected, they become ill-disposed toward the village. Most of these deities are pleased with bloody sacrifices but one does not find, in this section, the orgies such as are prominent in the worship of the village gods of South India.[1]

THE VILLAGE PRIEST—THE PANDA. The religious life of the Kol is connected, as has been seen, with the lesser deities and evil spirits. Worship centres at the village shrine and is usually directed and controlled by the village priest. While the Brahmin priest may be called on occasions which require his presence, such as weddings, name-giving, Bhagawan worship or the like, he has nothing to do with the actual worship at the village shrine. His presence has a social validity rather than a religious one. The worship of the village *devis* is not reserved for a particular class. Any man who seems to have the proper credentials may become the village priest and is called a *panda*. The *panda* is usually a Kol, and while they respect the Baiga priests, the latter are usually called only for magical purposes; it is customary for a Kol *panda* to perform all that is necessary for the religious life of the community. It is usual to find but one recognized *panda* in a village, but every village does not necessarily have such a man. It may be necessary for one village to call a *panda* from another village. But the line of demarcation is so uncertain that, if such a priest is not able to come, any one of the elderly Kols may temporarily perform the function of a *panda*. The *pandas* do not confine themselves exclusively to their religious duties, and often they are found digging, cutting grass, breaking stones and performing all that the average Kol does.

In a certain sense the office is hereditary, although the son must prove his worth before he is recognized. It is usual to find that the officiating *panda's* father was the village priest before him, or a priest at some other village. The son is trained by the father, and at the time of the *bawa* when the father is possessed of the *devi*, the son is the assistant and keeps the shrine in order and the elements propitious as long as his father is in the trance. If the *panda* has no eligible son, it is the one whom "the *devi* selects" who becomes his successor. At any rate the son has to pass tests which will indicate whether or not he is the *devi's* choice.

1 Whitehead, Henry, *The Village Gods of South India.*

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

Only once did we find a Kol shrine with a roof. Usually shrines are just raised platforms of earth about the base of a tree, preferably a *nim* tree. The older and larger the tree the better.

Concomitants of Worship. The following items are usually found as component parts of the central village shrines.

1. *Flags* (*Jhanda*). Flags are an essential part of the village shrine. They are usually set up on bamboo poles which are in turn bound to the trunk of the *nim* tree. It is also not infrequent that these are placed high above in the tops of the tree where the flag waves over all. The flag makes it known, they say, that the deity is present, and the colours and colour combinations usually indicate which deities are likely to be found there. The flags also serve as an attraction to the godlings who may come and perch upon them. They also frighten away evil spirits. The bamboo pole is usually about fifteen feet long and may have from one to seven flags attached to it. The village pays for the purchase of these flags unless there is someone who wishes to gain merit by giving them to the shrine. The Kol *panda* who is in charge of the shrine and its properties, puts the flags on the pole and sets it in place. The flags themselves are from 18 to 24 inches in length and about six inches wide at the widest part.

In addition to these larger flags on the bamboo pole, there are always found smaller flags at the base of the tree or at the spot where the blood of the sacrifice is sprinkled. They are quite small and are brought by individuals or families who place them in position when the offering is made. These flags are usually red. When one seeks a boon from the goddess and makes a promise to give a sacrifice if the boon is granted, he should set up a red flag as a witness to his promise. A flag is set up by those going on a journey as a witness to the fact that they will make an offering when they return safely.

In general red is the favourite colour of the *devis*. There are some colours which are characteristic of certain *devis*. Kali likes black; Asmani likes white or red; Khermai is sometimes given green, though red is more common; yellow is for Sannyasi. This set-up lacks consistency, like much among the Kols, for some deny any particular significance and say that the flags are merely decorative. While the smaller flags may be set up at any time, it is usual that the larger flags are set up only once or maybe twice a year, *Chaita* and *Kunwar*, spring and fall, being the accepted times for new flags.

2. *Iron Tridents* (*Trisul*). These are found in varying sizes and numbers. There should be at least one long one with a very sharp point, see figure 25, and there are usually more. Smaller ones

l:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

If, during a worship period, a *baus* does not come when it should be expected, ashes are sprinkled over the worshipper. Probably some demon is near, and the spirit of the *devi* will not enter as long as a *bhut* is about, and this will frighten him away. A person who is ill, or who is facing some danger, may come, make an offering, and sprinkle ashes over himself, saying the magical words "*ochha, ochha.*"

11. *A Grass Bundle* (*Chhahur*). This is the magic grass, and provides shade, shelter, and protection to *devis*. The *chhahur* is composed of stalks of wheat or some other sacred grass like *kans* (*Saccharum spontaneum*), *kusa* (*Poa cynosuroides*) or *urai* (*Vetivera zizanoides*) tied in a bundle to the end of a bamboo stick. These bits of grass are taken from thatch roofs of the houses in the village, usually one stalk from each house. Thus each house honours the deity and will therefore be protected. At times of smallpox or cholera this is a very effective procedure, and one or two stalks are brought from each house and tied together by the *panda* and set up. Each family which gives the grass is thus protected. Strings of red, yellow and black beads are usually hung about the *chhahur*. They give the household added protection as the *devis* are still more pleased.

12. *Flowers*. Marigold (*Tagetes erecta*), and *Tulasi* (*Ocymum sanctum*) plants are nearly always seen in connection with Kol shrines. The marigold is a sacred plant and is usually found in connection with Hindu worship, while *tulasi* plants are often found there too. At Kaimur, Kali lived in a *tulasi* plant and black bangles were hung upon it to indicate that fact.

13. *Bangles* (*Churi*). Bangles, being a feminine adornment, are always found at Kol shrines. These are usually red, yellow or black in colour, and they seem to be used with discrimination. They may be tied on a pole or on a *nim* tree, or fastened to some part of the furnishings of the shrine.

14. *Vermilion* (*Sendur*). Red lead is very necessary in worship. It was seen how it stimulated Mahabir into action. *Devis* like it, and it is also a devil scarer and helps to protect the shrine.

15. *Mounds* (*Pinda*). It is not infrequently found that there are one or more mounds raised on the mud platform to represent *devis* and to be their dwelling place. These are generally whitewashed once a week. At Kaimur, one was for Khermai and the other for Mari *devi*; at Benda Bhainsokhar was worshipped this way.

16. *Earthenware Vessels* (*Ghara*). These are not always found, but during the hot season are usually hung either in the tree or on a pole over the shrine. Sometimes liquor is kept in them. This is pleasing to the goddesses, especially Kali. Sometimes water is kept

l:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

778 [271 776] in these vessels, and a tiny hole pierced in the bottom so that the water drops over the shrine. This is popular in warm weather when the *devi* should be cooled and the dripping water is pleasing to her.

17. *Tinsel* (*Tika*): Women often place a small round dot made of lac tinsel on the centre of their foreheads. It is usually of red colour. [302] These bits of tinsel are used in the shrines as well, and are stuck on it here and there. The *devis* like them and they help to attract them to the shrine.

18. *Stone* (*Patthar*). Bits of stone, usually pieces rounded in the bed of streams and longish in shape, are often found somewhere about the shrine. This may be an imitation of the *Salagrama* stones found [931] in connection with the worship of Vishnu. Sometimes they are of *lingam* type such as used in the worship of Siva.

This sums up the items usually found in Kol shrines. Probably no shrine we saw had all these components, though the Kaimur shrine came nearest to it. In addition to the above, there was at Kaimur [823] an unusual feature. This was a flat stone which had apparently come from some ancient Hindu temple and on which two figures were carved. The *panda* of the shrine claimed that it was brought from Rewa and [782 784] that the figures represented Sharda and Kalki. The stone must have weighed about eighty pounds, but, it was claimed, if a *hom* offering were performed when it was moved, it became very light and was [386] easy to transport. It was coloured red with *sendur*. It will have been noticed how imperfectly anthropomorphized the godlings are, and that no special images are required.

The only Kol shrine which had brick walls and a roof was found on the outskirts of Katni. The room measured about five feet square inside, was four feet high, and had a flat roof. This was called the shrine of Khermai, although on the flat top Barmai was said to dwell. [824] Also tongs were there for Sannyasi *deo*. The usual bundle of *kans* grass (*Saccharum spontaneum*) was on top of it.

778 793 The offerings, the lighting of the lights and the placing of the necessary parts, are all in the hands of the *panda*. It is not part of his work, however, to keep the shrine clean and properly plastered. This is the duty of the women of the village, and they take turns in doing it. The shrine is plastered at least once a week and cleaned oftener. The sweepings, including ashes, dust, bits of cocoanut shells and the like, are not swept to the ground beside the shrine, but are carefully put into a basket by the woman who is doing the work. If they should be thrown out upon the earth, evil will result, so they are carried to a stream or a tank and thrown into the water. They are sacred ashes, likened unto the ashes following a cremation and must be respected.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

778 782 [824] such seem to be the case, a piece of lemon may be thrown well away from the shrine. The evil spirit will go after it, forgetting all about what is going on at the shrine. Such spirits are easily outwitted in this manner.

Foods offered include almost all kinds cooked in *ghi*: *puris*, *khichri* and various sweets. *Ghi* itself is frequently put about.

[825] Animals which make acceptable offerings include the chicken, goat, pig and sheep. The latter is very expensive and is not often resorted to. The mature goat or pig is almost never sacrificed—young ones are preferred by the *devis*. Usually a *devi* desires a female of the species offered, and a *deota* a male. The animal to be sacrificed is brought before the shrine, having been first washed and marked with *sendur*. Its throat is cut with an iron knife and the blood is sprinkled directly before the symbols, or at the foot of the tree where the little flags are located. Sometimes the animal is decapitated with a single blow, and only the head is taken on the platform, and blood from it [262 264] dropped over the symbols. The animal is then cleaned, cooked and eaten beside the shrine, and the people partake of a ceremonial meal together. The bones and bits left over are carefully gathered and taken away, either by some low-caste Hindu who may be around, or by some Kol who takes them outside the village boundary and [435] deposits them in a *nala* or place where water is likely to flow. The kid or suckling pig costs from one to three rupees each depending upon the size. Kols never raise pigs and so have to buy them. Goats, [231] however, are often kept and are generally available. The kind and size of animal offered usually depends on the economic condition of the worshipper. It is also said that when a man desires to make an [787 793] offering, he will pray that in a dream the kind of offering he should make may be revealed to him. A *panda's* advice is also sought.

Some deities are said to have particular preferences regarding [776 822] the colour of the animal sacrificed. The Kols are far from consistent, but generally for Kali or Kalika, the colour should be black. Khermai generally prefers white and Marimai red. Most of the *devis* are not very discriminating.

776 778 782 Kols make these offerings in order to protect themselves from the troubles, diseases and miseries of life. Possibly they will lead the deities to be merciful. They are promised that if all goes well they will receive sacrifices and offerings regularly. If offered properly, these sacrifices are thought to bind the deity and practically force her to do as the worshipper desires. The people are thus psychologically confident of a good outcome. If the deities are kept pleased and happy

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in this way, all is well; but if they get angry, they will trouble the people who have neglected them.

778

THE HOME SHRINE. Shrines found at the homes are much simpler than the village shrines and are found either inside or just outside the house, or in both places. Those outside the house are placed in the front wall facing the courtyard, and the wall of the house is a part of the shrine. Sometimes a little hole is made in the wall to shelter the *devi* when it rains. These shrines may be dedicated to any of the *devis* mentioned in the preceding pages—Asmanimai, Kalimai, Khermai, Marimai and Shardamai being the most commonly worshipped outside the house. One finds flags above, and also below; the iron trident; black and other kinds of bangles; a *salagrama* stone; *sendur* marks and the like. Iron lashes and strings of beads are not uncommon.

The place reserved within the dwelling for the household goddess, or god is even simpler. There is a niche in the wall from four to six inches above the floor. Within the niche is found a *salagrama* stone [386] or some iron symbol reddened with *sendur*. Vermilion is also daubed on the wall round the niche. The floor space immediately below the [237] deity is plastered with cowdung. A small trident usually leans against the wall at one side of the shrine; there is a *dip* which is [782] lighted at dusk, when the women of the house prostrate themselves before the shrine. As was noted, both kinds of shrines are usually found. If the house is just a hut of branches, and there is no earthen wall, symbols of the deities will be found on the floor in one of the corners. The house shrine is generally called *dewahar* or *dewala*.

787

DEVI POSSESSION. (*Bawa*). The phenomenon of spirit possession is fairly common among certain of the lower classes. The Kols also practise this. The trance occurs before the village shrine and is usually induced only at the time of the *Jawara* festivals, which come at the spring and autumnal equinox. It may be resorted to on other occasions if there seems to be a case of extreme necessity. The actual [533] trance is induced partly by the singing and the beating of drums, at which Kols are so adept. The person seeking the *bawa* takes his place before the *devi* and after a period of concentration and emotion begins to tremble, then shout, beat himself upon the ground, and becomes in appearance a totally different person. During this time he will answer questions put to him by persons seeking guidance, who believe that it is not he that is answering them, but the spirit at that time resident in him. During [151] this period, the one under the possession of the *devi* is practically insen-

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broke it upon a stone and separated the kernel, putting a bit of it in the fire. The juice of the remaining lime was squeezed out on the ground, the oil of the lamp was poured out, the knife was stuck into the ground and water sprinkled about seven times as he muttered incantations. Then with a shout he fell back exhausted, where he lay for several minutes before opening his eyes in a sort of stupefied manner. The pieces of cocoanut were then distributed to the singers and players. The man sat up, seemed normal again, and showed his hands, as if to say that the wounds were healed and no ill had befallen him. The group left and went to their homes. We heard later that they got thoroughly intoxicated and had a small pig for a feast. The whole performance lasted approximately an hour.

GODDESS SEPTS. Kols do not worship all the goddesses mentioned in the previous lists, but usually limit themselves to certain of them; they have a certain number which they call their own deities. Usually the son should worship the same number as the father worshipped, but not necessarily the same ones. By way of illustration, the following shows the reaction of five Kols who happened to be talking about this:

1. Three Deities: Shardamai, Kalimai and Barmatimai.
2. Three: Kalki, Phulmati and Sharda.
3. Said he too had three and named those in 2.
4. Four: Phonamuki, Athabhuji, Lorhadhar, Asmani.
5. Seemed much puzzled and said he worshipped several but no particular number.

TREES AND RELIGION. In another place more will be said about Kol beliefs concerning trees.[1] The chief trees thought of in connection with deities are noted here:

The *Nim* (*Melia azadirachta*) is the best tree for the Kol and is considered to be the home of Khermai, although other *devis* also like it.

The *Pipal* tree (*Ficus religiosa*) and the banyan tree (*Ficus indica*) are the home of Baran *deo* and other rather dangerous spirits. At Sehora a giant *danawa* lives in a *pipal* tree.

The Tamarind tree (*Tamarindus indicus*) is a favourite home of the *churel*, a particularly vicious spirit, but is also the abode of Chithra *devi*.

The Banyan tree also shelters Basdeo and Sannyasi.

1. See Chapter IX.

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796 825 Kols everywhere observe this festival. On the fourth day of *Sawan* or *Srawan* they should observe a fast which ends with a feast on the fifth day. On the morning of the fifth day Kols worship some symbol of *Nag* and put out saucers of milk near termite hills and other places where snakes have been seen or suspected. No digging or ploughing is done this day lest the snakes be disturbed or injured. [574] Sometimes the women do no grinding or cutting. In the evening there is a big feast of "*puris, sewai, bara*, milk and sugar."

796 [776] *Naodurgan*. Literally, "Nine Durgas." This refers to the *Jawara* festival noted above, and is especially connected with the one observed in the fall. Kols say it is observed in remembrance of the nine *devis*. Durga *devi* is the eldest and eight more accompany her. Hindus usually speak of this as *Naoratri* or Nine Nights.

Phag. This is the same as the *Holi* festival, which we have described.

Pusan. In Rewa it was said that this was held in the month of *Pus* (December-January). This may be a variation of the so called [574] *Khichri* festival, for at this time Kols say they worship no particular *devi*, but have a feast with some friends.

796 789 [144] *Rakhi*. "Protector." The full title of this festival is *Rakhibandhana*, "amulet tying." This ceremony is performed in the month of *Sawan* (July-August). This is probably the most unhealthful season of the year in the villages, a time when malaria is very common, and something must be done to ward off illness. A coloured cord decorated with tinsel is tied to the wrist; husbands should tie one on the wrists of the wife and the wife on the husband, sisters on the wrists of brothers and *vice versa*.

[177 773] This festival is based upon the Hindu legend from the *Bhavishyottara Purana* in which the story is told of the earth, men and gods being under the power and tyranny of the great King Bali, who, by his devotion to Siva, had gained enough merit and power to rule. Before Vishnu became incarnated as the Dwarf Vamana and subsequently conquered him, it was necessary to have some kind of protection from this demon. Vishnu gave Indrani, the wife of Indra, a coloured silken thread which was tied by her about Indra's wrists, and thus he secured protection from Bali.

796 177 *Ramnavami* is the birthday of Rama and comes on the ninth day of the month of *Chaita* (March-April). This coincides with the ninth day of the spring *Jawara* festival, and is the Hinduised term a Kol may use to describe the doings that night. See under *Jawara*.

796 789 184 *Sirwani*. This is another name for the *Rakhi* festival. *Sirwani*

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Chapter IX

MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

The Kols are fundamentally a primitive tribe, even though they have been for many years in contact with Hindu thought and life. It will be found therefore that they have outlooks which are properly termed animistic. This does not necessarily imply that their thought forms are simple and that a 'primitive' people have a 'primitive' outlook. Kol thought, though not philosophic, is complex and involved, and has behind it a long history. These beliefs are not limited to 'primitive' people either, but are shared with other groups living about them, and extend up into the very fabric of the thinking of intelligent Indians. 177 771 812

There are certain forces which are opposing this point of view, such as education, travel, books, and modern inventions, to say nothing of contacts with higher Hinduism and the political movements of the day. There are many ancient institutions such as caste, the authority of the Brahmins, and idolatry, which are being questioned at the present time; and these questionings have their repercussions among the villages and tend toward a sophisticated attitude toward many of the beliefs described below.

There are other forces which aid in the maintenance of animistic outlooks: ignorance of what is going on tends toward the *status quo*; women among the Kols are universally illiterate and are the stronghold of the old ways. Many a Kol says that he puts on charms for his wife's sake, but adds that he really does not believe that they do much good. Custom is another force very difficult to move. It is very strong over India and its persistence, in spite of knowledge to the contrary, is a thing which strikes an observer. Belief may change, but custom, though rationalized, remains as before. [562 212]

A word of caution should be uttered concerning generalities in regard to animistic thought. There are few, if any, perfectly consistent generalizations which may be made concerning Kol beliefs and outlooks. For example, when the spirit world is described, one should not immediately conclude that *all* Kols enter into these concepts, any more than one should judge that all westerners regard the number thirteen with superstitious fear.

The Spirit World. To the average Kol all things animate and inanimate may be the abode of spirits of one sort or another. 776

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776 Many of the daily occurrences can be traced to their activity. They are sometimes friendly, but it actually happens that they are more often unfriendly and do their best to injure and annoy human beings. The Kols have mentioned certain kinds of spirits with which they are familiar. A few Kols have claimed actual encounters with them, and yet others were not quite so certain of their existence.

775 761 *The Bhut* is commonly mentioned by the Kol, but the use of the term is frequently in a general sense. Ordinarily this is the spirit of one who has died a sudden or a tragic death. A *bhut* is always of the male gender. The spirit of a man killed by a train is sure to become a wandering *bhut*. So is the spirit of a murdered man, as well as one dying of a dread disease. The general belief is that it will remain in this form for twelve years until released. In a general sense, any man not taken up by Bhagawan after death becomes a wandering *bhut*. [165] Another curious explanation was given. It was claimed that the expectation of life for a Kol is about thirty years, and for this period one must dwell on earth, whether in the body or in the spirit. If a person twenty years of age should die for any reason, his spirit will still have to stay upon the earth for another ten years, and will wander in the form of a *bhut*. A man living past thirty years of age will not become a *bhut* unless he meets a tragic end. The same group also related that during this unexpired period in which the spirit must wander upon the earth, the spirit of a very good man becomes a very evil *bhut*, while the spirit of a very bad man was a friendly and harmless *bhut*!

775 682 The *bhut* of a murdered man is certain to haunt the murderer's family and in the course of time is sure to destroy it. Murder thus means only more trouble and Kols should never resort to it. It is a fact that murders among Kols are very unusual. *Bhuts* as a rule never injure members of their own families and will even help them. Therefore the Kol holds that one should never fear the spirit of a loved one.

775 *Bhuts* and other spirits may enter a room as does the air which comes in everywhere; though the average Kol usually considers that they enter through some larger opening in the house, such as a door [342] or a window. The lack of windows in Kol houses is partly due to this point of view.

The Churel is the spirit of a female who has died in distressing circumstances, especially if the death was caused by child bearing. The *churel* is of dreadful appearance, and her feet, if one would look at them, are turned backwards. She often attempts to seduce men and ruin them. As a rule her front is attractive but she is black and

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putrid behind. She often dwells in a palm tree. Certain Munda tribes, like the Bhuiyas, sometimes extract the fetus from a woman dying in pregnancy, and the two are buried on the opposite sides of a stream, as it is the theory that no spirit can cross water.[1] If the two should join they become witches. Kols do not practice this as far as we were able to learn, and no operation of this nature is performed. The woman is buried with the child still in her womb.

The Danawa is said by the Kols to be one of the most powerful of all spirits. He is likely related to the Vedic *Danava* who was connected with Vritra, one of the atmospheric demons. He lives in tall trees, and, if he can get the opportunity, attacks one at night, catching his victim round the throat and almost choking the unfortunate person to death. He is particularly met with in the Kaimur jungles.

The Jind, or more popularly *Jin*, according to the Kols, is the spirit of a Mohammedan, although it is usually considered one of the many kinds of spirits known to Mohammedans. Kols have a very bad opinion of *Jinds*, yet say that they know little about them, as they do not pay much attention to Kols but are out to injure Mohammedans.

The Kabbis is a lover of human blood. This demon has long teeth and sharp nails and attacks one ferociously. The nails are used to make deep cuts which let the blood flow and it is sucked or licked up by them. If the victim should struggle and give trouble, the demon will plunge his long teeth into the body and thus hold him while he drains out the man's life blood.

Matia is the demon of the whirlwind. It may destroy crops, bring up great storms and carry away roofs and thatch houses. During the warm season whirlwinds are common and one can trace their course by a cloud of dust reaching far up into the sky. Vultures soar about, looking for those whom *Matia* may destroy.

The Pret is the spirit of the deformed, the cripple, or the mentally defective. Males become *prets* and females are *pretins*. While Kols commonly mention them they usually do not believe them to be very dangerous, nor can they cause much trouble. Rather they should be pitied and fed, so sometimes food and water are placed out for them if they are suspected of being in the vicinity.

The Rakshasa is a terrible injurer and the very name of this demon is an euphemism, 'the preserver.' Most Kols have a great fear of a *rakshasa* and the report is that this kind is more commonly seen than any other and that they also suck blood if they can get a chance. They are usually about at night time and are very dangerous to women who are with child, and try to gain access to the house by

1. Crooke, W., *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p. 105.

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776 entering into it in the form of a dog, a cat or an owl. They may assume almost any form and their bite is very poisonous. They can quickly change their shape and appearance. The female type, called *rakshasi* goes about in the likeness of a beautiful girl and seduces men. Nevertheless, this type of demon is easily fooled and if one is clever and does not lose his nerve he can outwit them.

Kols are also familiar with other kinds of spirits such as the *gayal*, the *pisach* and the *kogi*, but little seems to be known about them. The literature on tribes and castes is rich in spiritism and much might be compiled concerning spirits. The above represents the usual Kol point of view.

776 824 775 THE DWELLING PLACE OF SPIRITS. Kols believe that trees are the most likely place for spirits to dwell. The *banyan* tree seems to be the favourite place for the spirit, although it is said that the *churel* prefers a *nim* tree, particularly if broken or dead. It is claimed that the mango and the *bel* trees are not often inhabited by spirits. The tamarind tree is connected with the *jind*.

776 823 Spirits may also dwell in rocks and certain weird shapes in their appearance are probably due to the activity of some spirit living there.

776 825 764 Animals may become habitations for spirits, and some, like the *rakshasas*, freely enter into them. The graveyard and the burning grounds are sure to have some spirits dwelling near them and Kols avoid such places; or if they must pass by, go two by two. Such places should never be approached at night.

776 342 789 It was noted that spirits enter houses through doors and other openings. Doors are therefore generally surrounded by demon-scarers, and windows are never found. Evil spirits also enter and dwell in human beings, coming in through the mouth, eyes, ears or nose; so these points should be especially protected. They may also run up the legs or the arms and suitable bangles are worn to prevent this.

754 THE EVIL EYE: NAZAR. Men and women may also be possessed of an evil power to injure or distress one another. The evil eye, *nazar*, exerts a powerful and dangerous influence and is often evidenced by a squint or the loss of an eye. The person with an evil eye has an inherent power which may be transmitted through a mere glance, and this power strikes one as surely as a bullet. The very glance of such persons is particularly penetrating and it is not good to have any one gaze at you, for it may be that death is in the look. Children are particularly liable to be affected by the evil eye, and ill health and

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even death are often traced to this influence. A woman is more likely 754
to have an evil eye than a man. Kols believe that Gond women
should be avoided as far as possible for many of them are said to have [648]
an evil eye that is likely to affect children. A well-dressed person is
more likely to be affected than a poorly dressed one, and to put on fine [292]
clothes is to attract attention and therefore invite danger.

The evil eye may also be directed against animals and plants; 754
so a bad crop, or the illness or death of an animal, may be due to some 789
one with an evil eye. Pumpkins are often trained to grow upon the 824
roof of Kol houses and may be protected from the evil eye by white-
washing an ordinary flat tile, making a cross in the centre with lamp- [241]
black, and putting upon the tile as many dots as there are pumpkins
growing upon the roof. This will protect them and no pumpkin will
rot. A rotted pumpkin is the sure sign of the activity of this mysterious
force.

The time of eating is a particularly dangerous one from the point 754
of view of the evil eye. No stranger should come into the presence 264
of one who is taking his meal, and at that time he should turn his [609]
back on all people, including even the members of his own household.
If one possessed of the evil eye should see the face of a person taking
his food it may have a serious result. Therefore it is wise never to
interrupt a man at his meals; this a stranger will never do. If
accidentally confronted in this way, the eater should stop his meal and
wait till the person has passed out of sight. To be seen in the act of [291]
putting on new clothes is also to expose oneself to the dangers of the
evil eye, should such a person happen by.

WHAT THESE FORCES DO. We have seen something of the 776
supernormal powers which the average Kol feels are all about him. 754
What do these powers bring to pass? Some indication of this has
been given already, but more may be stated. Diseases, particularly
wasting diseases, are surely due to the presence of evil spirits or the
spell of the evil eye. Any mysterious disease may be ascribed to [777]
these powers. Ill luck is also due to the attention of the forces named
above. A man may be tripped up: it is the work of a spirit; he
cuts his hand: a *bhut* directed the axe. We were told of a certain
evil spirit dwelling in a banyan tree on the Great Deccan Road near 776
Katni. He was particularly annoyed by cyclists: probably he could 754
not get used to the march of civilization. This spirit was especially 493
active at midday and midnight, and if a cyclist should fail to show
respect, by not dismounting and walking by the tree at those parti-
cular hours, he was sure to be killed. It was commonly reported

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that several men had already lost their lives, and others had been injured because they failed to show deference. At any time of the day one who passes this place should get off his cycle, stop, ask permission of the spirit to pass by, then walk with his cycle and mount it again a few paces beyond.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES. Various kinds of devices are used by Kols to ward off the power and effectiveness of the evil eye and the spirit world. The protective remedies commonly employed are listed alphabetically.

Abuse. The abusive language and songs generally used at the time of the wedding have a prophylactic value. There is somehow resident in *gali* a power which protects the bride and groom from evil influences.

Ashes are commonly employed both on religious and social occasions. Immediately after birth the new-born babe is dusted with ashes. They are also scattered over the place of birth, lest the spirits get a portion of the afterbirth and use it against the child and the family. A magic circle of ashes is put around the bed of the mother and her new-born child. When the *nara*, the stump of the umbilical cord, falls off, it is buried in the floor of the house, and a fire which is kept burning over the spot constantly supplies fresh ashes.

Ashes are kept in shrines to frighten evil spirits away. A portion thrown into the air from time to time will be effective in doing this. A fleck of ashes in a child's mouth after feeding with milk keep *bhuts*, who are passionately fond of milk, at a safe distance from the child. The ashes from burnt cow dung cakes are especially useful as are the ashes of wood from the *bel* tree.

Bangles are a protection. The glass types are mostly decorative, but their colours are efficacious as certain colours repel demons. Kols believe that metal bangles are the most effective, particularly the copper and iron types. As *bhuts* may enter through the feet or hands, bangles on the wrists and ankles prevent that way of entry.

Beads about the neck of children are particularly defensive against the evil eye. They should be of bright colours and the Kols most often use a type made from lac. Blue beads about the necks of cattle help to protect them from the evil eye and all valuable animals should be so guarded. A unique charm noted in this connection, though not among the Kols, was that of old bicycle chains fastened about the necks of cattle.

Charcoal, because it is a form of ash and black in colour, is a devil-scarer. Mixed with milk and wine and spread in a circle, it

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forms an effective bar to evil spirits who dare not cross that line. Sometimes it is dropped into milk as it is brought home, in order to protect it from the milk-loving *bhuts*.

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. *Colours* are also an effective protection. Black is particularly valuable as a prophylactic from the evil eye. Hence lamp-black is put on the face just beneath the child's eye. This disguises and renders him less attractive, and as a result the evil eye will not linger on him. Black marks on a white-washed tile or earthen pot ward off the evil eye in the case of crops. Black also pleases Kali and she is glad to see it. [776]

Red frightens off demons and red flags found above almost every shrine have a dual significance : they please the good spirits and frighten off the evil ones. The *sendur* (vermilion) put on the bride and groom is a protective at that vital time. [585] Following the purification ceremony, six days after the birth of the child, the mother's feet are coloured red. [846]

Yellow also protects and there are anointings with turmeric in oil at the times of birth, wedding and death. At such crises of the soul they keep away forces bent on evil.

White is also used : a white *pot*, or daub, placed on the side of the face, immediately in front of the ears, is said to be protective in the case of the child and wards off the evil eye.

789 823

Copper. Iron and copper bangles are common among the Kols and some say that of the two copper is to be preferred and is more effective ; it was offered to Hanumanji the monkey god, and is hence very sacred. On no account should this sacred metal be used for dishes nor *lotas*, especially if the *lota* is to be taken out for latrine purposes. [415 514] To do this would insult Hanumanji and show disrespect to copper. The copper bangle is a very potent charm, and among Kols it is often found that children have a copper anklet on one foot and an iron one on the other. The same applies to the wrists. The little boxes frequently seen attached to strings about the neck, containing powerful protectives such as tiger's claws or *mantras* (written charms), are generally made of copper.

789 372

Incense and Smoke. Incense attracts good deities and, conversely, repels evil personalities. At the time of worship incense is thought of as having this dual function. The odour of burning *ghi* is very effectual in this respect. Smoke usually repels demons and if articles which cause an evil odour are dropped into the fire they are driven away. In the Kol birth chamber the baby is passed through smoke soon after birth, and for some days the air in the lying-in room is kept smoky by means of a fire smoldering somewhere within it. [844]

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Lemons and Limes are able to protect one by attracting the attention of the spirit so that he forgets his original evil intentions. So a lime may be carried about one, tied in the loin cloth. A spirit approaches the man, smells the lime and makes for it, and is so taken up with its 'find' that it forgets the man. If this should happen, the lime upon examination will be found to bear evidences of this attack: the juice will be drained away and the lime may even be split. At the time of worship a lime is sometimes cut and thrown as far as possible. Evil spirits hovering about the sacrifice will take after the lime and, fighting over it, will forget what is going on at the shrine. Limes are also pleasing to *devis* and when the *hom* sacrifice is made some lime juice is frequently squeezed into the fire.

Magic Circles. There are many forms of the magic circle and the shape does not always have to be circular. Any circular article like a bangle or a string of beads is a protection. At the time of the *bawa* an iron ring will often be found encircling the fire for the *hom* offering. The tying of the village with a mixture of charcoal, liquor and milk is an example of the use of the magic circle. Such a circle is put about the place of worship if demonic influence is feared. The circle of ashes round the bed of the mother and her new-born babe has been previously mentioned.

Magic Symbols and figures are also efficacious. Such are pictured upon the walls of the lying-in room and on the walls outside the door, and we have given reproductions of them.[1] Sometimes they are tattooed on the body, and the swastika and the *shasti* are the favourites. Symbols marked by the priest on the forehead are useful protective devices.

Mantras. There is also a great power resident in *mantras* or magic spells. Such *mantras* are very potent in driving off evil spirits. At one time *mantras* may have been Vedic texts, but now-a-days the term *mantra* "is extended to all magical forms of words, letters, sounds or any hocuspocus which bring good luck to the happy possessor of them and evil to his enemies, spirits, or casters of the evil eye. These are often inscribed on paper, the ink in which they are written is drunk, or they are kept in metal cases or inscribed on metal or other talismans."[2]

Some *mantras* which may be used against evil spirits and diseases are as follows:

1 See page 62.

2 Crooke, W., *Op. Cit.*, p. 290.

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Marhi, Marhi, I call you. Thou who are in the heart of the cemetery. By merely looking at the smoke of that dead body drive out fever, pain and all that is not well; for if they do not depart then she is not my Marhi.

171 539 755 789

5. To bring a curse upon, or even to kill an enemy:

171 539 754

Chandi he uppar Chandi awe. Muih phero nao. Khandi chakra uppar chakra dhawe. Nand masi ki hari ago ari, na tak, cha tak, pherna sath muih pherayu, tin so sath. Sachhi meri Chandi.

Chandi after Chandi appears: with moving form and circle; wheel after wheel comes. We have waited for this month and the time is exact. Now go here, now go there, make sixty circles with this instrument (may be a knife is in the hand). Yea, three hundred and sixty circles. My Chandi is true.

6. For cure from illness:

171 539 755 789

Khermai, Khermai, Khermai, main pukharu. Teri dara yadi yeh achhi na kare to no hahawe sachhi meri Khermai. Washa khali na jai to dhobi ghat na hawe.

Khermai, Khermai, Khermai, I call to you. I am at your door. If you do not cure this one then you are not truly my Khermai. No, her words never fail, (but if you do not come) then better go to the dhobi ghat, and take your bath.

Probably no rational interpretation of these *mantras* is possible. The translations are more or less literal and no translation can really give the feeling put into them. They call upon the gods, plead with them, challenge them, threaten them. To tell one to go out and bathe where the *dhobis* wash clothes is an insult: no decent person would do such a thing. If the goddess can be angered she may accomplish the task just to prove that she is not what the speaker insinuates. The goddesses are made in the likeness of unstable and fickle persons and thus partake of human failings. When the *mantra* is properly recited it is thought to have an inherent power to force the deity to do what the one using the *mantra* desires. The above

171 789 776 [534]

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examples are current among low caste Hindus and do not represent the more polished type to be found higher up.

Milk. The use of milk has been mentioned in connection with the magic circle. The good spirits like it, and certain evil spirits are passionately fond of it. Milk is scattered over the ashes after the funeral pyre has burnt down. Milk propitiates Nag, the serpent god.

Names. Great care should be exercised in the selection and use of names, as they become a part of one's personality. A good name is also attractive to evil spirits, and if the spirits come to know that a certain child has such a name they may make an attack on the innocent thing. Therefore, call the child by an evil name such as 'fly', 'filth', 'one-eyed', and the spirits will not condescend to notice him. [754] Such names protect in another manner as well. If one gets possession of the name of someone—his real name—he may, through the charms of black magic, work harm to the person concerned. Therefore the child's true name should never be known to people lest they should work ill with it. The use of magic on a false name is ineffective and no harm can come to one.

Noises of various types are demon-scarers for they dislike noise; [825] hence the beating of drums, the occasional fireworks and other devices, by which loud noises are produced when necessary.

Nuts and Seeds of various kinds are useful. Many Kol children have a *ghata* nut (*Zizyphys xylopyrus?*) tied to a string which is hung somewhere about the person, often on the wrist. Mustard seeds are freely sprinkled about if spirits are expected, and, as in the case of limes, distract their attention. They are scattered round the place where a body is burnt. Black *urad* pulse (*Phaseolus radiatus*) is often [585] used on similar occasions. The *supari* nut (*Areca catechu*) is placed below the sacred pole in the marriage booth and under the foundation stone of the house. These are in this manner protected from evil.

Salt has its magic use among the Kols. It has a preservative power, and this, together with its power over demons, accounts for its being scattered over the place where the dead have been cremated. [765] It should not be put into the food during the period of mourning after a death in the home, and the chief mourner should not use it for a year.

Scape Animals. Among Kols there is a belief that an evil spirit resident in a man may be transferred to an animal and the man thus freed. It is not unusual to bring a man believed to be possessed of a spirit before the shrine together with a chicken or goat, usually the former. The *panda* invokes Kherma amid singing and drumming, or mostly drumming, and there may be a *bawa* along with it. Under

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789 824 [844] [846] [844] in room and about the door leading to it. Wood from the *bel* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) is useful if burned in the lying-in room and this is done for a period of six days after the child's birth, for this is a critical time from the point of view of evil influences. In Hindu thought *bel* is associated with the god Vishnu. The *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) is helpful in affording a safe delivery and a bit of it is laid over the abdomen of a woman expecting a child. Mango leaves, being lucky and everlasting, are uniformly used in connection with the wedding cycle. Ginger is a devil-scarer, and turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) with its yellow colour is used continually [585] to afford protection. The *magrohan* of the wedding booth should have turmeric put into the hole in which it is placed. The same practice is observed when the umbilical cord is buried or the foundation of a house is laid.

789 776 753 [184] *Tying the Village.* Tying the village and loosing the *devi* is a magic rite which is common among Kols and comes at set seasons. In Barela, for example, this festival is observed in connection with Mari *devi*, the goddess of cholera. It takes two forms and the observance is reported all over the Kol community.

The cholera *devi*, Marimai, must, if possible, be kept imprisoned in her shrine for a portion of the year, particularly during the cholera season. At Barela they say that she must be tied between *Baishaka* (April-May) and *Pus* (December-January). The rest of the year, say for the period of from three to four months, she may roam as she pleases. About the middle of *Pus* a *panda* cuts the cotton cord kept in the shrine. It is this cord that is supposed to imprison her, so when it is cut, she is no longer bound by it. Other *devis* are also considered to be loose at that season. Along in the month of *Baishaka*, the deity is brought back to the shrine by offerings and sacrifices, the magic thread is tied by the same *panda* that released the *devi* previously, and she is now considered bound. This is followed by a feast near the shrine to which only the men may come.

Along with this there is a second form of tying the village and the two are occasionally combined. In this case some water, wine, milk and powdered charcoal are brought to the shrine where a sacrifice is offered and the *devi* implored to let the magic ring about the village prevent the entrance into it of cholera or smallpox. The *panda* then mixes the ingredients mentioned above and the mixture is put into a glass bottle or into a tin with a tiny hole in the bottom. The men then proceed to tie the whole or a part of the village. If the whole is tied it is called *gaonbandh*, and if part, *tolabandh*. They proceed with drumming and singing and a line of the mixture is laid down, either

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from the tin or the bottle, around the whole or part of the village. The *hom* sacrifice should be made by each household, and following the whole procedure, animals may be sacrificed at the village shrine, and a feast enjoyed by all.

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TESTS FOR EVIL SPIRITS. It was said by Kols that there are certain obvious evidences of spirit possession. Mental cases are attributed to evil spirits as are cases of paralysis and the like. If one acts irrationally it is taken for granted that he is possessed and efforts should be made to free him.

Sometimes it is not quite so easy to tell whether an evil spirit is really about, or whether he should be blamed for the misfortune under consideration. If a man has a disease which defies treatment, and if he is wasting away, it may be that he has an evil spirit working in him. To determine for certain there are some tests which may be made. Among them are the following:

On the floor of the room, in which the man lies ill, a circle made with wheat flour is marked out, and in the centre of the circle an earthenware lamp is placed. Grains of wheat and *urad* pulse are carefully counted and put in a particular position and sequence. The Baiga or *panda*, as the case may be, then pronounces some *mantras* over them and the room is left to the ill man for the rest of the night. In the morning the grains are counted again and their positions carefully checked, and the ring of flour is examined for any marks or indications of having been disturbed. If there are signs of a disturbance of any kind, or if there are missing grains, it is a sure proof that an evil spirit has been about and has meddled with those articles. Of course, it is difficult to believe that any disturbance could not have taken place with mice and rats everywhere in abundance.

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A second method is based upon the use of limes. It will be recalled that spirits are very fond of this kind of fruit and greedily attack them. Several limes are therefore taken, and a large number of sharp needles stuck into each, perhaps as many as twenty-five. These limes are then placed in a position where a spirit, were it to come into the room, would be sure to notice them. In the morning these are again carefully examined, the needles pulled out, or the limes broken and the needles inspected. If there should be a drop of blood on any of the needles the spirit has been there. It would have seen the lime, snatched at it greedily without observing the needles imbedded in it and been pricked by their sharp points. Any formation of rust would be interpreted as blood and be the indication of the presence of a spirit.

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MEETING A SPIRIT. Even though properly protected from spiritual forces one is still not immune from their attacks. If one should meet a spirit it is always proper to be very respectful in its presence and to try not to offend it in any way. If the *bhut* is addressed as one would address a gentleman he may behave like one. If one moves further on and the *bhut* insists on following, the person attended may, provided he is properly protected by charms, call out the name of Khermai three or four times in rapid succession. Her very name is so powerful that the evil spirit is helpless and goes away disgusted. But should the person not be properly protected by amulets and the like, he should not call upon Khermai.

If it should be necessary to pass the known dwelling place of a *bhut* or other spirit, the person should first stop and respectfully ask the spirit to let him pass safely. No person should be boastful in the presence of a spirit nor use the name of Khermai except as a last resort. The spirit should be addressed as "Maharaj" if a male, and if a female as "Mata". These respectful forms of address are pleasing to them and they will allow such people to pass without harm. [576]

789 [791] [648]

HOW SPIRITS MAY BE CAST OUT. Evil spirits may be cast out only by those who know the secret processes and *mantras* necessary, and such secrets are usually carefully guarded by the initiated. The *panda* is probably familiar with methods although not all of them would admit that they were, and a member of the Baiga tribe is *par excellence* the man. The *bawa* is usually associated with this ceremony.

The *supa* method, forms of which are described below, is the usual method of driving out an evil spirit. Again, the priest while possessed of the *devi* may order the family to perform certain rites, such as feeding the group, sacrificing at the shrine, abstaining from rich foods, and the like; or he may even beat the unfortunate being with his iron lash until the blood flows. This will surely frighten the demon away.

There is another form known to the Kols by the name of *jharna*, 'the sifting or winnowing'. A *supa* (winnowing fan), a *kansiya* (sickle) and a bit of *Kans* grass (*Saccharium spontaneum*) are made use of in this particular wave ceremony. The person on whom these will be used must have fasted for a period and have had *mantras* pronounced over him, then the above articles are one by one waved over him. The sickle, the grass and the winnowing fan are all symbolical of removing a spirit: the sickle, as it is first waved, symbolizes the cutting down of the spirit, the grass implies the work is done, and in the sifting [934] [785]

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A sleeper should never be awakened rudely or directly, for to do so is dangerous to him and may bring a curse upon the person awakening him. If it is found necessary to awaken another person a noise should be made from a distance and should gradually be increased. This gives the soul time to get back. Kols believe that if one dies in his sleep it may be due to the spirit being overcome by a demon and the thin cord connecting the two being broken. A man awakened suddenly may also collapse due to the fact that the one awakening him did so before the spirit had time to return to the body and his connections were cut off.

Dreams are good and bad, not merely in the sense of being pleasant or unpleasant, but their significance is either favourable or unfavourable. It is good to dream of elephants, Kols say, and of meeting relatives. Dances are welcomed as a part of a dream by some Kols, and others do not attach a good significance to them for they believe somewhat in opposites. Weeping, for example, is good for it means that happiness will come, and to dream of copper coins (the cheapest) is a sure sign that one will get silver ones. To dream of a death is also good, for it means that some one who is ill will soon be well. But it is bad to dream of a dead body or of wood or clay, for these things indicate that there will be a death in the family. Happy experiences in dreams may really mean that tragedies are ahead, and so to dream of a wedding or a hearty laugh is not good. While a dream of copper portends riches, to dream of gold or silver or jewels and ornaments, has the opposite significance. To dream of snakes or fish is also a bad omen.

We asked a number of Kols whether they ever dreamed that they were flying, but none ever had.[1] One said that he had often dreamed of riding a bicycle, though in actual life he had never ridden on one. Another Kol, working in a lime kiln, described a dream in which he went to the house of the superintendent of the kilns and when he entered he found everything he had ever wanted to eat all spread out on the table before him. He said that while in his dream it made him happy, he nevertheless knew that it probably meant that he would be hungry before long.

The gods and goddesses often reveal through dreams the kinds of gifts and sacrifices they would like Kols to give to them. If a *devi* should appear in a dream and demand a chicken or another animal, it would be necessary for the person to offer this. Sometimes the *devi* is asked at the shrine to reveal her will to the person in a dream.

1 Elwin records dreams of flying among the Baigas. *Op. Cit.*, p. 412.

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825 The *galgal* or *maina* (*Acridotheres tristis*) is believed to be engaged, but not yet married, and is called a *brahmacharia*. He is never injured. Parrots are never molested, for some of them can speak and utter [773] Ram! Ram! One legend, recorded in another place[1] has it that the *Sath Bhais* gave the Kols their gift of music.

824 *Trees*. Among the Kols trees are reverenced largely in connection with worship. The *nim* tree (*Melia azadirachta*) appears to [776] be the favourite tree of the Kol tribe. It is the home of Khermai, [778] the chief deity, and every Kol village or community has a *nim* tree under which the major shrine of the village is found. It has already been noted that this tree has certain magical protective powers and medicinal properties. Demons seldom, if ever, take up their dwelling [513] in a growing *nim* tree, and it is considered healthful and safe to sleep under one.

[778] The *pipal* tree (*Ficus religiosa*) and the banyan tree (*Ficus indica*) are also sacred to Kols and it is not infrequent that they put shrines under them. However, these trees are more liable to shelter 824 evil spirits than is the *nim*, and Barandeo is often found in them. We 776 were told about the growth of a certain *pipal* tree in one of the villages which we visited. It appears that Barandeo wanted to live on the veranda of that house so he saw to it that a *pipal* tree began to grow there. The leaves of this tree, however, were repeatedly eaten off by goats but still it grew. The people who lived there then realized that this must be the work of some deity and cared for it. As a result it grew and good luck came into the house. Kols will never destroy a young *pipal* tree even though they know that eventually it will destroy 824 the building. Hutton, in writing about the survival of primitive 171 belief, says the following in connection with the *pipal* tree:

> We may therefore continue to expect to find very ancient and primitive beliefs continuing under the guise of Hinduism. The sanctity of the fig tree, for instance is possibly to be associated with the beliefs of the Negrito inhabitants who appear to have formed the earliest population of India. It is possibly on account of its milk-like sap that the *ficus* is associated with the fertility cults in Africa, Italy and New Guinea as well as in Assam and in South India, and it is generally also connected with the spirits of the dead. This cult appears to be shared by the Andamese who are an approximately pure Negrito race, and perhaps the only race still surviving in the world comparatively unmixed in blood. At any rate they and their beliefs have probably been isolated for some 5000 years at least.[2]

824 As far as Kols are concerned the mango tree (*Mangifera indica*) 776 and the *bel* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) are not commonly inhabited by either

1 See Chapter X.
2 *Census of India*, 1931, 1 : 1, p. 397.

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spirits or goddesses. It has been noted that the mango branch plays an important part in wedding functions. It was also noted that in building the wedding booth Kols ought to use, if possible, wood from the *saleh* tree (*Boswellia serrata*) both for the main supports of the *marhwa* and for the sacred pole, the *magrohan*. The consensus of opinion is that for the latter the *saleh* is absolutely indispensable.

The *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) is found beside Kol shrines and in the courtyards of their houses. It should be watered daily and its leaves are said to have certain medicinal qualities, being especially effective in fevers. Tulasi was once a woman who engaged in religious austerities for a long time and at last dared to ask to become a wife of Vishnu. For this presumption Tulasi was cursed by Lakshmi the wife of Vishnu, and was turned into this plant. Vishnu comforted her by promising to be near her in the form of a *salagrama* stone. So they are often associated in worship and even in Kol shrines a *salagrama* stone is usually found close to the *tulasi* plant. The leaf is highly scented and a bit is often broken off by Kols and eaten with their food. During the evening hours it is worshipped by having a small *dip* lighted before it.

Dead trees are generally feared as the death of a tree is most certainly due to an evil spirit's influence and a *churel* often kills a tree to make a residence for herself.

MARRIAGE OF TREES. The Kols have a ceremony for the marriage of trees. The mango tree is the one usually married and this should be done at the time it first begins to bear fruit. Unless such a tree has been married no adult should eat of the fruit, although a child may do so. There are at least two methods of marrying trees, both of which require the Brahmin priest. In the first instance a mango tree should be married to a tamarind tree (*Tamarindus indicus*). This tree may be near at hand, or even some distance from the mango tree. The ceremony appears to consist in having a married couple wind a cotton thread coloured with *haldi* seven times around the tree. They should move about the tree in a clockwise direction and as they do this the Brahmin recites sacred texts. First the mango tree is wound then the tamarind; if they are close enough together the thread may be stretched from one to the other. It is not unusual to find a mango and a tamarind tree planted close by. Many of the features of the regular wedding are incorporated, and following the function there is a feast.

In the second instance a small wooden peg, variously coloured, takes the place of the tamarind tree. This may be made out of tama-

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and fearful for at least twelve years. Usually such spirits are not dangerous, and some have said that after twelve years they go to Bhagawan or may be born into the world again. 762 775

Sometimes the woman may die in childbirth and the child be born alive. If so, it is thought very likely that the child owes its life to an evil spirit, who desires it for some evil purpose, and hence the child may really be a *bhut*. It is very difficult to get a wet nurse for such children and they usually do not survive very long. 845 776 775

We happened to be in a Kol village a few hours after an earthquake and we asked a group what caused the movement of the earth. Nearly all at once agreed that the earth shook because of *pap*, or sin. One or two though, began to think and said that the real reason was that the earth rested upon the heads of *Nag*—a many-headed serpent, and that once in twelve years he had to shift the earth from one head to another and that produced an earthquake. But when confronted with the obvious fact that an earthquake came oftener than once in twelve years they were puzzled and could not account for it. The latter explanation is the one frequently advanced among Hindus, but Kols were not very familiar with it. 823 [773 177]

Rain, so intimately connected with the welfare of forest people, may often be brought to pass by magical processes, and there are frequent instances of this among the tribes and castes of Central Provinces. In many of these rites nudity is an essential part, for moved by pity at their representation of poverty, Indra or some rain *deota* will grant refreshing showers. No trace of nudity practices was found among the Kols. The more sophisticated Kol believes that rain is sent only by Indra, the Vedic god of rain, and that it is only through a Brahmin that the gift of rain may be secured. 821 [291] [177]

Some Kols use frogs in an attempt to bring the rains. Frogs and rains are intimately associated in their minds, for in the weeks that precede the coming of the monsoon, the frogs croak long and loudly, and it is thought that their calls bring the showers. So if the monsoon is delayed and there is a drouth, Kol boys will round up all the frogs they can. The larger they are the better for this purpose. A thread is tied round the leg of each frog and they are then dragged about the village. As they pass by houses the people living there come out and sprinkle a bit of water over them. The boys and their frogs finally end up at the village shrine and the latter are tied before the *devi*. It is said that the croaking of the frogs at the shrine will affect the *devi* resident there and she too will long for cooling showers, so she gets to work and uses her influence and power to help bring the rain to pass. 821 825 789

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539 he was a god. He picked up some dry pieces of wood and threw them
773 toward the tiger saying, "*Chhu, chhu*". The wood became the wild
825 dogs of the Indian jungles, which do not fear the tiger and attack it in packs. These dogs attacked the tiger and with their tails spread urine in his eyes. This made the tiger blind and fearful and he hastened away.

[776] Since that time Kols have held the tiger sacred because it is associated with the goddess Parvati; also the wild dog, because Mahadeo created it to protect himself. This also accounts for the fact that tigers today are afraid of the red dog. Neither the tiger, the jungle dog, nor any dog should be killed.

539 773 How Ill Temper brings Disaster, and its Cure. Biran, a Kol, was the servant of a *raja* who possessed a very bad temper. This king constantly used bad language in the presence of everyone he met and annoyed Biran immensely. Once this *raja* gave a great feast to which many people were invited. Biran and his friend Dadul also came. After the food was taken, someone got something very bitter in his mouth, and was forced to spit it out on the costly rug, on which they were seated for their meal. This was seen by the *raja* who became very angry and used disgusting *gali*. Many people left, among them Biran and Dadul. The rainy season was about to come, but the rains were delayed. What was the matter? No one could tell, and week after week passed with no cooling drops. They did not know that it was all due to the ill temper of the *raja*.

The farmers felt that they must break up the ground so they might catch any rain that fell. Biran was ploughing along with others when his plough turned up a frog, and the frog cried out in his dismay. Bhagawan heard this, and thinking that the frog was very thirsty, sent rain upon the earth; the wickedness of the *raja* could no longer restrain its fall. But the *raja* was still angry and called for Biran and scolded him. Nevertheless his words had no more power to bring a curse upon the land.

"This story shows that magic can remove a curse," was the comment of the teller.

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539 them. *Tabalds*: drums. But the procedure is irregular for the goddess is spying on the procession of the men-folk.

9. A *bihdri*, a song used at seasons of enjoyment and happiness. From Katni. [776] Dasarath: the father of Rām.
Sītā: the chaste wife of Rām.
Doshmātā: a name for the wife of Indra.
Belhāri leaves are used for *pān*.
Rām and Bhagawān are often used interchangeably.

10. A *dādrā* from Katni. Kānhāi is another name for Krishna, one of the incarnations of Vishnu and famous for his flute playing. His name is usually associated with the Jamunā river and the city of Brindāban.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS.

[776] [534] 1. A *rdi* from Jubbulpore. Ganesh is the god of wisdom, son of Siva and is distinguished by his elephant face. *Timki*: kettle drum.

2. A *rdi* from Sihora. The *dholak* is the common type of Indian drum.

3. A *dādrā* from Katni, sung by women.